

At least one dead in Los Angeles quake

LOS ANGELES (R) A strong earthquake shook Los Angeles and surrounding towns in the morning rush hour on Friday, killing at least one person, triggering rock slides and sending frightened people pouring into the streets. One woman died when she was struck by a falling steel beam in a stable at Santa Anita racetrack, another woman was cut by shattered glass and at least 14 people were treated for minor injuries. A 15-metre section of the wall of the Pasadena playhouse theatre, 12 kilometres east of Los Angeles city centre, collapsed. A main shopping street of suburban Pasadena — Colorado Boulevard — was littered with glass from hundreds of shattered shop windows. A large shop lost all its windows and people wandered in and out of the displays until police set up barriers. Rock slides were also reported in Pasadena, an affluent town with mansions belonging to some of the most prominent families of southern California. The earthquake, in an area of nine million people used to earth tremors, measured 6.0 on the Richter scale, strong enough to cause severe damage, the California Institute of Technology reported.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تيمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية. الراي.

Saddam tells Shiites he'll forget the past

BAGHDAD (R) — President Saddam Hussein has told the Shiites of Karbala he is willing to forget their post-Gulf war rebellion. "Those who made mistakes, we consider their deeds as part of the past, and a new beginning will start," he told religious leaders from the holy city who visited him on Thursday evening, the Iraqi News Agency reported. Shiites in Karbala controlled the city for 10 days in March. They killed several senior government and Baath Party officials. Republican Guard units crushed the rebels after five days of fierce fighting which damaged the shrines of Imam Hussein, grandson of the Prophet Mohammad, and his brother Abbas. The tomb of their father, Imam Ali, is in the nearby city of Najaf. It was also damaged during the Shiite uprising. President Saddam urged Karbala religious leaders to cooperate with government and party officials to speed up repairs so that Shiite pilgrims can visit the shrines again soon.

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Government to seek Parliament vote in extraordinary session

Water, health, employment and economy are priorities
No change whatsoever in stand vis-a-vis Palestine issue

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Taher Masri has reaffirmed that his government will present its programme to and seek a vote of confidence from Parliament during the legislative body's extraordinary session which begins next month rather than wait for the lawmakers to begin their regular session in October.

Mr. Masri, in a meeting Thursday with the chief editors of Jordanian newspapers, said the decision to seek an early vote of confidence from Parliament was supported by his coalition cabinet.

"It is meaningless for any government to function for four or five months and implement its programmes without the confidence of Parliament," he said.

Despite the absence of Muslim Brotherhood members in the government, Mr. Masri said, his cabinet remained very much a national unity coalition. He disclosed that he had offered the same portfolios less the Ministry of Education to the Brotherhood, but the movement had "regrettably turned down the offer."

Mr. Masri noted that the Ministry of Education, which was headed by a Brotherhood member in the Badran government, had sparked controversies and this was the reason he held back that portfolio from the movement.

Mr. Masri said his contacts and meetings with the Islamic bloc were not a tactic but were part of a sincere effort to convince the movement to take part in the government.

Mr. Masri said he pursued contacts with other blocs in the Lower House but not with all the 80 members of the House because it was impossible to contact such a number of deputies. The Muslim Brotherhood did not enter the government but the other blocs did, he noted.

The prime minister said that the government formation came at a time when the country is passing through special circumstances. "The change in government comes at a time when Jordan is passing through special

circumstances," said Mr. Masri, who held the external affairs portfolio in the Badran government.

He rejected suggestions that his government would primarily aim at securing a negotiated settlement to the Palestinian problem. "We will not sell out any Arab rights," he said. The prime minister referred to the letter of appointment given to him by His Majesty King Hussein and said: "Jordan's political line is firm and has never changed. My government will pursue the same policy as that of the previous government concerning the Palestinian question."

Mr. Masri expressed surprise at what he described as groundless rumours and accusations at the government. "We, as a country and a leadership, want an honourable solution to the Palestinian question in line with international legitimacy. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and as such the PLO will talk about the Pales-

tine question in any future talks on this issue."

The prime minister said that the letter of designation had made it clear that the new government would be devoted completely to dealing with internal issues, particularly at this stage, when we are paving the ground for political activities and the formation of political parties.

Three fourths of the letter of designation are dedicated to internal issues," he noted. The government has already started examining draft laws on political parties and press and publications in preparation for presenting them to the parliament, he said.

"Differences in opinion are a healthy phenomenon as long as they are presented within the democratic framework and within the accepted norms of dealing," he said.

Mr. Masri called on people to lessen their reliance on the government and to rely more on themselves.

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Guns blaze in Algiers, Islamic leader threatens holy war

ALGIERS (R) — Guns blazed in the streets of Algiers Friday and Muslim fundamentalist leader threatened to launch a holy war unless troops and tanks withdrew.

Militants threw up barricades to defy an army crackdown. Shooting broke out shortly before Abassi Madani, leader of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), told thousands of Friday prayer worshippers:

"If the army does not withdraw, we will be obliged to call a jihad (holy war)."

There was no word of casualties from the mid-morning gunfire or from shooting during the night, some of the heaviest since unrest began last month.

Troops and tanks tried to dis-

Benjedid quits as FLN chief

ALGIERS (R) — Algerian President Chadli Benjedid has resigned as chairman of the National Liberation Front (FLN) which has ruled the country since independence in 1962, the Algerian news agency APS said Friday.

APS quoted sources close to the party central committee as saying Mr. Benjedid would remain as an ordinary party member.

The committee on Friday ended an extended meeting which debated the violent clashes between security forces and Islamic fundamentalists.

courage crowds heading for mosques identified as likely flashpoints in a five-week-old confrontation between Algeria's secularist rulers and Islamic extremists.

But thousands of people streamed from narrow side streets, gathering outside Konba

mosque where Mr. Madani spoke.

An army helicopter clattered towards Bab Al Oued and nearby Bouzareah suburbs, bastions of the FIS and which saw most of the overnight shooting.

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Kashmir militants hold Israeli

SRINAGAR, India, (R) — Kashmiri militants holding an Israeli said on Friday they would keep him pending an investigation of a kidnapping attempt by another militant group that ended with one Israeli dead and three wounded in a gunfight.

The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) did not say how long that would be, but captured Israeli Yair Yitzhaki told Reuters by telephone he did not fear being killed.

"From the beginning, they said 'we are not going to kill you.' At first I was not sure they were not going to kill me. Now I am sure they are not going to kill me," he said after a JKLF caller handed the phone to him.

Yitzhaki, who said he was blindfolded and had no idea where he was, said his new captors were "like angels to me."

"Do you know what it is to know you are going to die and someone gives you life and a touch of love? They were so good to me. I like them so much," said Yitzhaki, who said he was unhurt but sounded as if he was in shock, sobbing frequently.

The JKLF, the main group fighting India for a secular, reunited and independent Kashmir, has opposed kidnappings. It first said it would soon free Yitzhaki, but changed its mind.

A spokesman said the JKLF decided to set up a committee to investigate the attempted kidnapping of six Israelis on Thursday by a fundamentalist group influenced by the Iranian revolution, and would keep Yitzhaki until it was over.

The original kidnappers are fighting to join Pakistan, which controls one-third of Kashmir.

Three Israelis wounded in the gunfight and an unhurt companion escaped their captors after fighting back following their abduction from a houseboat on a Srinagar lake.

One militant was killed, along with Israeli Erez Cahana, 22, the first foreigner to die since the anti-Indian revolt erupted in January, 1990. Police have reported more than 2,400 deaths since then.

Yitzhaki said he survived by hiding in shrubs for about six hours before being driven out of cover by thirst. He went to a house and began shouting in the courtyard, he said.

"The servant came out and hit me on my head. She thought I wanted to kidnap her. And then all the villagers came out and started to hit me. Everyone in the village. They wanted to take me to the police."

Then the JKLF came and took him away, Yitzhaki said.

Yugoslav planes blast rebel Slovenia, EC sends envoys

BELGRADE (Agencies) — The Yugoslav army said Friday it was halting a three-day military blitz against breakaway Slovenia after seizing all frontier posts between the republic and neighbouring countries.

Tanjug news agency announced an end to the offensive by federal forces after the northern republic's airports from the air and sent tanks and troops to control its last frontier posts.

"The Yugoslav army says it gained control over all border crossings in Slovenia and therefore ceases further activities," Tanjug said.

There was no immediate reac-

tion from leaders in Slovenia. Earlier, the Slovenian president said he was ready to negotiate, but only after federal attacks stopped.

At least nine people have died in fighting since Slovenia and neighbouring Croatia declared Tuesday they were seceding from the troubled Balkan federation. The government responded to the independence declarations with a massive show of force, focusing on Slovenia's airports and border crossings.

Federal fighter-bombers blasted missiles at Slovenia's main Ljubljana airport. Two Austrian news photographers were

killed when they were caught in a firefight near the airport between federal army troops and Slovene territorial units.

Slovene Defence Minister Janez Jansa, speaking on Ljubljana Television, said Thursday there were about 100 killed and injured on both sides, but there was no independent confirmation.

Slovene Information Minister Jelko Kacin told reporters the airport at Maribor, Slovenia's second-largest, also was attacked from the air. But several people at the airport, about 100 kilometres northeast of Ljubljana, said they saw no signs of fighting.

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Shamir polishes 'Jordan is Palestine'

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir told a visiting British delegation Friday that Palestinians already have a state in Jordan, an aide said.

Linda Shimon, spokeswoman for the prime minister, confirmed a radio report that quoted Mr. Shamir as saying "Palestinians are the majority in Jordan and therefore they cannot claim they have no state or homeland."

Mr. Shamir's remarks to members of the British Labour Party, come as the United States is trying to start Middle East peace talks that could be decided the fate of the 1.7 million Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The "Jordan is Palestine" theory has been used often by Israeli leaders to oppose a Palestinian state.

Mr. Shimon also quoted Mr.

Shamir as saying he still wants a dialogue with Arab states and feels "the start of negotiations will be an achievement in itself, even if in the beginning we won't see any results."

Meanwhile, the daily Hadeshot quoted chief of staff Ehud Barak as warning of a future war.

"Israel stands before a period of decision and before it are two possibilities: either negotiations will begin, or we will begin the countdown toward a comprehensive war," General Barak said at a meeting with an army unit.

Mr. Shamir was also quoted Friday as saying that only war could alter Syria's hostility to Israel. Asked in an interview with the daily Yedioth Ahronoth whether Israel could end Syria's hostility, Mr. Shamir responded: "I don't believe that a country's policy can be changed due to an influence of outside elements,

unless these elements cause a drastic change in the balance of power in that country be going to war."

If somebody wants Israel to decide on taking Syria out of the circle of hostility, then maybe he is offering an action of war against Syria. I do not support it."

Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Arens virtually ruled out Syrian President Hafez Al Assad Wednesday as a candidate for peace talks with Israel.

"I think Assad is really not in a category of people interested in making peace with Israel," Mr. Arens told a news conference. "He has pursued a consistently hostile policy."

Mr. Arens said Syria was adding to its stockpile of missiles and posed the kind of threat Israel experienced during the Gulf war from Iraqi Scud attacks.



Prime Minister Taher Masri (second from left) Thursday meets with the chief editors of Jordanian newspapers: Mr. Mahmoud Al Kayed of Al Ra'i (third from left), Mr. Hashem Kreishat of Sawi Al Shaab, Dr. Musa Kilaani of Al Dustour and Mr. George Hawatmech of the Jordan Times (with back to camera) in a meeting attended by Information Minister Khaled Al Karaki (left), Information Under-Secretary Trad Al Fayez (right) and Jordan News Agency Director-general Ali Safadi (Petr photo).

Bush says Iraq violated ceasefire, U.S. options open

Combined agency dispatches

U.S. PRESIDENT George Bush said Friday that Iraq had violated the Gulf war ceasefire by refusing to allow U.N. observers to inspect an Iraqi base where Washington believes nuclear materials are stored.

Asked whether Iraq's action had violated the ceasefire, Mr. Bush told reporters on air force one: "Yes, without a doubt. There's incontrovertible evidence to this effect — incontrovertible, unarguable."

Friday, Iraqi soldiers fired into the air to chase U.N. inspectors away from an Iraqi base, U.N. officials said.

"From the U.S. standpoint, we can't permit (Iraq) to go back on

Saddam tells officials to cooperate with U.N. team

BAGHDAD (R) — President Saddam Hussein ordered officials Friday to cooperate fully with the U.N. team inspecting Iraqi nuclear sites, the Iraqi News Agency reported.

An Information Ministry statement said: "The president authorised the minister of foreign affairs to order at once that all parties and organs concerned allow, with no hesitation, the U.N. representatives to see or inspect what they wish."

The Iraqi News Agency said President Saddam was speaking at a meeting of the ruling Revolution Command Council on Friday night.

"The president has ordered all responsible authorities to cooperate in full with the U.N. representatives and make their mission easy in line with commitments pledged by Iraq," the agency said.

this solemn agreement and to threaten people that are there

(Continued on page 5)

Strike paralyses occupied territories

JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Palestinians in the occupied territories staged a general strike on Friday to protest at Israel's "annexation" of Arab Jerusalem 24 years ago.

Shops, factories and businesses closed and traffic stopped in most parts of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including Atab Jerusalem.

Israel "annexed" Arab Jerusalem on June 28, 1967, less than a month after occupying it along with the West Bank and Gaza and part of the Golan Heights during the Middle East war.

Leaders of the 42-month-old Palestinian uprising against Israeli rule issued a leaflet saying: "We call upon our masses to consider this day a day of special struggle against the annexation and to confirm that Jerusalem is Arab and the capital of the Palestinian state."

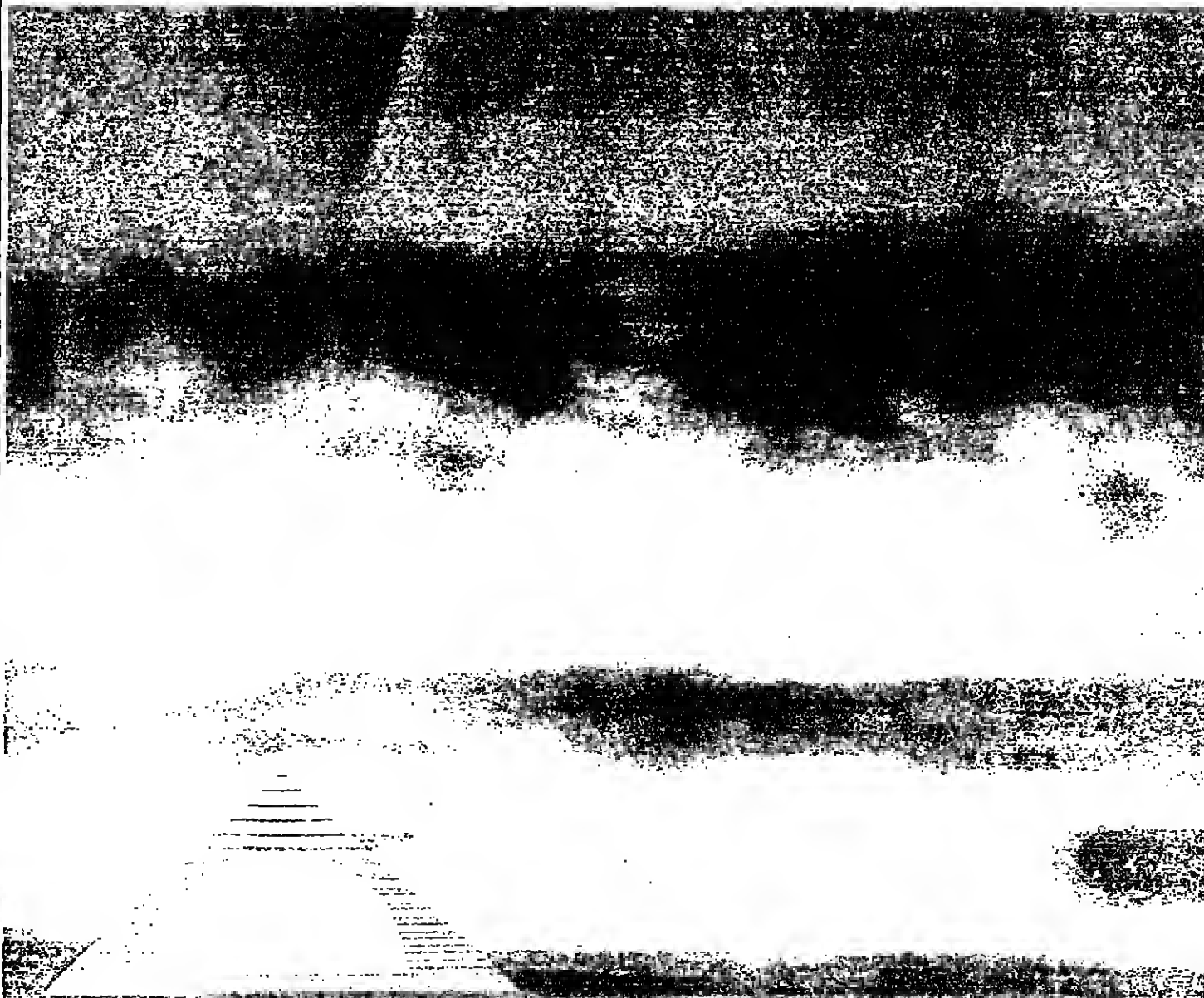
In Gaza, three masked Palestinians set ablaze an Israeli bus near the village of Beit Hanoun, reporters said. The masked men ordered workers off the bus before setting it afire.

Palestinians in the occupied territories observe partial strikes every day and full strikes on days designated by uprising leaders.

Israel, eager to tighten its grip on Arab Jerusalem, has settled about 120,000 Jews in the "annexed" area and in the Jewish quarter of the Old City.

Activists took to the streets in a

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U.N. chief says not enough progress made for Cyprus talks

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said Thursday that not enough progress had been made to hold a high-level conference on the question of Cyprus.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar also left open for the time being the issue of who would attend such a meeting.

At a closed-door briefing for Security Council members, he proposed that two of his top aides confer during July and August with all parties concerned to try to work out a set of ideas covering all points of an outline agreement.

Cyprus has been virtually partitioned between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots since 1974, when troops from Turkey occupied the northern part of the island after a short-lived coup in Nicosia engineered by the military junta then ruling Greece.

The United Nations has been trying for years to reunite the island under a federal system with Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot provinces.

The Turkish Cypriots, who in 1983 proclaimed their own breakaway state recognised only by Ankara, at present control about 37 per cent of the territory.

Referring to rival proposals by the two sides for an international meeting on Cyprus, Mr. Perez de Cuellar said: "It is indispensable that the two sides are within agreement range before the beginning of such a meeting."

"I therefore propose to review the situation at the end of August with particular reference to whether the conditions are ripe to proceed with a high-level international meeting and to consult with the council accordingly."

He suggested that his special representative in Cyprus, Oscar Camillon, and a senior official at U.N. headquarters, Gustave Feissel, should meanwhile "meet with all concerned to try to work out a set of ideas on each of the eight headings of the outline."

The Security Council was expected to issue a statement on

Friday endorsing the secretary-general's proposals.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar, who is due to pay a private visit to Turkey in early July, said progress was urgently necessary on the issues of territorial adjustments and displaced persons.

These concerns the area that would come under Greek Cypriot administration, enabling a substantial number of displaced Greek Cypriots to return and the number of Greek Cypriots who would be able to live in area to be administered by the Turkish Cypriot community.

The U.N. chief, whose statement to the council was made available to reporters, said the council might wish to reflect on who would attend any high-level meeting and we would turn to it in due course for guidance.

Greece and Cyprus have proposed an international conference presided over by the secretary-general and attended by Greece, Turkey, Cyprus the two Cypriot communities and the five permanent members of the Security Council — the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, China and France.

The Turkish Cypriots strongly object to this, on grounds that the Cyprus government represents only the Greek Cypriots, who would therefore be doubly represented. Turkey has proposed instead quadripartite talks involving the leaders of the two Cypriot communities, Turkey and Greece.

Cyprus has informed the U.N. secretary-general that Turkey must declare its position on two specific issues before the deadlocked talks can resume, government spokesman Akis Fantis said.

Mr. Fantis said this was the gist of the government's reply to a letter the U.N. chief sent this week to the governments of Cyprus, Greece, Turkey and the breakaway state in north Cyprus. Raouf Denkash, the president of the Turkish Cypriot state, said Wednesday that Mr. Perez de Cuellar in his letter had

accepted a Turkish proposal for talks among those four parties for a Cyprus settlement.

He was speaking to reporters on his return from Turkey where he conferred with President Turgut Ozal.

Peace talks between President George Vassiliou, the Greek Cypriot leader, and Mr. Denkash conducted under the personal aegis of Mr. Perez de Cuellar, have been deadlocked since January 1990.

The planned visit to Turkey July 6-9 by Mr. Perez de Cuellar and U.S. President George Bush's plan to visit Greece and Turkey July 17-21 have fuelled speculation about an imminent breakthrough.

Mr. Fantis said that the Cyprus reply to Mr. Perez de Cuellar "stresses once more that what is important is the substance, and not the procedure."

"It stresses the need for Turkey to respond to the basic questions raised by the secretary-general so that the conditions for convening a conference on Cyprus can be met."

The two questions deal with the extent of the Turkish Cypriot territory in a proposed bi-zonal Cypriot federation and the number of Greek Cypriot refugees who would be allowed to return to their homes in the Turkish occupied zone.

Mr. Denkash was quoted by the semi-official Turkish Anadolu news agency as saying that during his talks with Mr. Ozal "we have not discussed what to give and what to take, but evaluated on what basis we stand firm and from which we can make some sacrifices."

He identified the "basics" as being his government, and a guarantee that the two-zone nature of the proposed federal Cyprus republic could not be diluted.

Mr. Ozal had earlier proposed a four-party meeting. It was rejected by Cyprus and Greece because it would give equal status to the breakaway Turkish Cypriot state.

Iran and S. Arabia to upgrade relations

NICOSIA (R) — Iran and Saudi Arabia, forging closer ties after years of tension, will exchange ambassadors soon. Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati said Friday.

The Iranian news agency IRNA, quoting Mr. Velayati's remarks on his return to Tehran from visits to Saudi Arabia, Britain and Switzerland, did not say when the envoys would be appointed.

Iran and Saudi Arabia, Muslim rivals and the world's biggest oil exporters, resumed diplomatic relations in March after years of acrimony caused by Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution and the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war.

Mr. Velayati held two rounds of talks with Saudi King Fahd and three meetings with Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal last week, when he performed Haj in Mecca.

Some 117,000 Iranian pilgrims performed the pilgrimage to Mecca last week for the first time since 1987 when 400 people, mostly Iranians, were killed in clashes with Saudi security forces during an Iranian demonstration in the Holy City.

Western diplomats said the Iranians' behaviour made the Haj a showcase of President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's new policy of seeking cooperation rather than confrontation with conservative Gulf Arab states.

An Iranian rally in Mecca on June 18 in which pilgrims shouted "Death to America," and "Death to Israel" ended without incident.

Iran's Shiite Muslim leaders, following the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, insist that Muslims should raise political demands during Haj.

The conservative Saudis ban political activities during the pilgrimage, but allowed the Iranians to hold their rally away from other pilgrims.

Mr. Velayati said the way the Haj was conducted "suited the dignity of the Islamic revolution... the Saudis too fulfilled the commitments properly."

Iranian mobs sacked the Saudi embassy in Tehran after the 1987 deaths and Riyadh officials branded Iranian leaders bloodthirsty madmen. The Saudis severed ties in April 1988.

But the two countries were brought together by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait last year although Iran, which remained neutral in the crisis, criticised Saudi Arabia for inviting U.S. forces to the region.

Earlier, the halting of the Iran-Iraq war in which the Saudis gave Baghdad billions of dollars had eased tensions between Tehran and Riyadh.

The IRNA report, monitored in Nicosia, made no reference to an incident on Wednesday when Mr. Velayati cancelled a news conference after about 30 demonstrators attacked an Iranian embassy car in a Geneva hotel.

The Swiss police and Foreign Ministry said Mr. Velayati was not in the limousine which was pelted with eggs and had two windows smashed.

But several callers to news organisations claimed they were among the demonstrators who dragged Mr. Velayati from the car and beat him.

Shortly after the incident, the French Foreign Ministry said Mr. Velayati had postponed a visit to Paris due to start later that day.

Mr. Velayati was expected to sign an agreement for a final settlement of financial disputes with France dating back to the 1970s, paving the way for restoration of full diplomatic ties with France and a Paris visit by Rafsanjani, his first to the West since Iran's Islamic revolution.

China denies report of nuclear arms aid to Iran

BEIJING (AP) — China has called an American news report that it was helping Iran develop nuclear weapons "sheer fabrication."

Wednesday's Washington Post carried a commentary by syndicated columnist Rowland Evans and Robert Novak that said Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani had sent about 20 nuclear technicians to Beijing for special training.

The columnists also referred to statements in Washington by Mohammad Mohaddessin, a top Iranian opposition leader, that Iran was determined to develop nuclear weapons and was looking to China for assistance.

"It is a totally groundless report and sheer fabrication," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Wu Jianmin at a weekly briefing.

He repeated for the second straight week China's standard policy statement on nuclear proliferation: "The position China adheres to is that does not advocate, encourage nor practise nuclear proliferation or does it help other countries develop nuclear weapons."

However, Algeria used Chinese aid to build a nuclear reactor that experts say is too small to generate power economically and too large for research. In the 1980s, China also secretly sold India at least 130 tonnes of "heavy water," used to make plutonium, a nuclear weapons component.

Mr. Mohaddessin, director of the international affairs section of the Mujahideen-e-Khalq of Iran, has said that in the past year, the Iranian government has allocated \$200 million to its nuclear weapons programme. He said Iran is prepared to pay for help, and thinks China is the most likely candidate because it wants hard currency.

Mr. Wu, however, said China supports arms control in the Middle East and will cooperate with other four major arms suppliers to the Middle East at a meeting in Paris next month on the issue.

China is the world's fifth-largest weapons exporter, and the Middle East has been one of the largest markets for Chinese missiles.

Mr. Wu said Vice Foreign Minister Liu Huaqin would represent China at the meeting originally proposed by the United States.

"We are willing to explore with all the parties the basic principles of arms control in the Middle East so as to promote stability in the region with a lower level of armament," he said.

Iraqis can travel where they want

BAGHDAD (R) — The head of Iraq's passport office said on Friday that Iraqis were free to travel wherever they wanted without having to say where or why they were going.

Major-General Samir Hameed told the army newspaper Al Qadisiya in an interview that passports were readily available.

"The citizens will not be questioned about their reason for travelling or where they want to travel," he said.

For the first time, Iraqis would be able to have a multi-exit permit, valid for one year. Passports are valid for four years.

"It has become a very quick process that even within one hour you can have your passport," Gen. Hameed said.

Iraq lifted a ban on travel on May 15.

Health worries increasing over Kuwaiti oil fires

KUWAIT (R) — Despite official assurances, Kuwaiti scientists are growing increasingly worried that thick black smoke billowing from hundreds of burning oil wells could plague the emirate's health for decades.

A leading oil researcher said on Friday oil particles and noxious gases from the fires — set ablaze during the Gulf war — were already causing serious problems and might have grave long-term effects.

"We could see an increase in asthma, eye allergies, infections of the respiratory system and other serious diseases," Jassem Bishara of the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research told the newspaper Al Qabas.

A doctor at Kuwait's chest hospital said last week health experts had not entirely ruled out the possibility that the oil fires could cause cancer.

"We'll only really know in 20 years time," said cardiologist Mohammad Shafiq.

The Kuwaiti Health Ministry says the fires do not pose a serious threat. But whenever the fumes blow over Kuwait City, cloaking it in semi-darkness, many residents complain of headaches and breathing problems.

The city has enjoyed reasonably clear weather since April because the wind blew the smoke out over the Gulf or south towards Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

But for the last week residents have choked on a swirling cocktail of sand and smoke because of a change in wind direction.

Pharmacies cannot stock masks and inhalers fast enough to keep up with demand. Hospitals receive a steady stream of asthmatics afraid of respiratory collapse.

More than a quarter of some 600 burning oil wells have been brought under control. The government hopes to have most mastered by next March.

But just 30 kilometres from Kuwait City the landscape is dotted with fires belching thick clouds of grey and black into the sky. Around the wells of the Al Ahmadi field, south of the city, the few surviving trees and plants are choking in soot.

The animal life of the desert, including lizards and small birds, has vanished.

"It is a catastrophe," said Ali Khuraibet of the Kuwait environment action team.

"Oil may be seeping into the ground water in some areas, which means it is entering the food chain through irrigation of farmland."

Mr. Khuraibet said that the carbon monoxide emissions were almost certainly causing an increase in global warming, affecting weather patterns and ecosystems around the world.

Scientists have observed particles from the fires settling as far afield as Japan and Hawaii and expect them to reach the west coast of Canada and the United States within a few months.

Nobody has concluded a full scientific study of the effects of the fires on health or the environment, but experts say the damage could take a generation to clear.

"Until research is done, we can only guess at the magnitude of the problem," Mr. Khuraibet said.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

American editor investigated on Israeli complaint

TEL AVIV (AP) — Michael Lerner, an American magazine editor who was here to lead a conference on Middle East peace, is being investigated on a complaint of incitement, police said Friday. The charge was filed by Eli Karamani, whose son was killed last year, allegedly by Palestinian nationalists. Police said Mr. Karamani charged that Mr. Lerner urged Israeli soldiers to refuse to serve in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, which could amount to inciting the soldiers to break the law. "If he said it, it could be incitement but... we have to understand the circumstances," a police spokesman said. "Just saying the sentence doesn't make it an offence. You have to know who he said it to." Mr. Lerner has reportedly left the country, following the conference earlier this week organised by his Tikun magazine. Police said it was unlikely an incitement charge could lead to extradition, adding, "it's not such an offence." Mr. Karamani's son, Ronen, was one of two teenagers found stabbed to death last year in Arab Jerusalem. No suspects were arrested, but police said Palestinian nationalists were suspected. The slayings set off anti-Arab riots.

EC court annuls duties on Libyan, Saudi urea

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Court of Justice annulled on Thursday anti-dumping duties on urea imported from Saudi Arabia and Libya from the Al Jubail Fertiliser Company, EC officials said. The Luxembourg-based court said the EC's executive had not given Al Jubail an adequate right of reply against charges that it was dumping the fertilizer at cut prices rates on the community market. It also said the commission had withheld important information on its findings from the company, which led to the imposition of definitive duties in 1988.

Switzerland allows arms export to Turkey

BERNE (R) — The Swiss government will allow exports of arms and military equipment to Turkey to start again after banning sales at the start of the Gulf war, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said. Swiss law prohibits the export of arms or military equipment to countries which are at war, facing the threat of conflict or in an area of dangerous tension. The spokesman said the government had decided exports, which were halted on Jan. 17, could continue because there were no indications Turkey was likely to become involved in a conflict. According to latest official figures, Switzerland exported arms and materials worth 26 million Swiss francs (\$17 million at current exchange rates) to Turkey in 1989.

Iran to draw up new anti-narcotics plan

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran has begun a campaign to wipe out narcotics use in five years, the Islamic Republic News Agency reported. During the anti-narcotics crackdown, more than 2,000 alleged traffickers have been hanged and over 50,000 addicts imprisoned since December 1988. President Hashemi Rafsanjani chaired a meeting this week at which anti-narcotics command centres throughout the country were commissioned to draft separate five-year programmes. IRNA reported. The government news agency said that 2,000 drug traffickers, 20,000 addicts and more than eight tonnes of narcotics were seized between March 21 and May 21.

U.N. begins relief air drops to Sudan

NAIROBI (AP) — The United Nations has begun airdropping food to thousands of Sudanese refugees who recently returned to their homeland from neighbouring Ethiopia. Paul Mitchell, a spokesman for the U.N. World Food Programme in Rome, said a total of 500 tonnes of food would be dropped, enough to feed an estimated 110,000 refugees for two weeks. The operation was to begin Tuesday, but was postponed a day due to mechanical problems in the aircraft. The food is being flown from Lokichokio in northern Kenya to Nasir, a Sudanese town near the Ethiopian border where most of the refugees have gathered. Mr. Mitchell said the onset of the rainy season has turned the area into a swamp, inaccessible by road and lacking airstrips where large airplanes can land. Therefore, most of the food must be dropped by air. The food, mostly grains, was donated by two U.S.-based relief organisations, World Vision and Catholic Relief Services.

Philippines expels Iraqi national

MANILA (R) — The Philippines expelled Friday an Iraqi national suspected of involvement in a failed bomb attack on a U.S. government library in Manila last January. Saad Kadhim, 32, was flown to Jordan from where he will be taken by land to Iraq, a Manila airport official said. Mr. Kadhim, who came to Manila as a tourist, was wounded on Jan. 19 when a bomb which police said he tried to plant near the Thomas Jefferson Library prematurely exploded. Police had said the attempt was in retaliation for U.S. bombing of Iraq during the Gulf war. Mr. Kadhim was the fourth Iraqi to be deported in connection with the incident. Manila earlier expelled an Iraqi consul and two Iraqi brothers. Mr. Kadhim had been held in custody at a police hospital since he was arrested after the bombing and had been kept away from the press until his deportation Friday.

Algeria legalises 17th political party

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria has legalised its 17th political party, the Algerian Contemporary Muslim Party. The official APS news agency said it was headed by Ahmad Benmohammed, a former member of the extremist group Takfir oul Hijra who is now a university lecturer. Mr. Benmohammed says he now proposes a "generous" brand of Islam, transforming institutions to Muslim values "gently and without convulsions." Algeria, shaken by fundamentalist unrest, was a rigid one-party state from independence in 1962 until reforms by President Chadli Benjedid in 1989 allowed other parties.

Vassiliou expected to bolster EC bid

VALLETTA, Malta (AP) — Cypriot President George Vassiliou on Friday began a three-day visit that is expected to lead to greater cooperation in the two countries' efforts to gain European Community membership. Both islands applied a year ago to join the EC as full members. Malta and Cyprus have many similarities.

Arens rejects aid linkage

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Arens said that Israel's impending request for \$10 billion in housing loan guarantees to settle Soviet Jews should not be tied to U.S. calls for halting Jewish settlements in the Israeli-occupied Arab lands and he makes it clear that Israel will fiercely resist such linkage...

Mr. Arens, in a talk at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said that in talks here with Defence Secretary Richard Cheney and other senior administration officials, the question of linking the housing guarantees and settlements had not come up. That appeared to conflict with reports in the Baltimore Sun and Washington Times that Vice President Dan Quayle had warned Mr. Arens that it would be difficult to grant Israel's request if the settlements issue is unresolved. The papers quoted Mr. Quayle spokesman David Beckwith.

But the Israeli embassy said that Mr. Arens, had denied receiving such a warning from Mr. Quayle. An official in Mr. Quayle's office affirmed yesterday that there had been "no linkage" of the two issues during Arens' meeting with the vice president.

Mr. Arens also said the Middle East peace process was stymied and accused Syria of buying new weapons with Saudi Arabian money for war against the Jewish state.

Returning U.S. troopers out of job at home

WEYMOUTH, Massachusetts (AP) — Charles Bullard came home from the Gulf war to a triumphant welcome, a deafening chorus of gratitude and patriotism. But when the echoes died away, he found himself without a paycheck.

"You go over there and you risk your life, and you come back and the they gave your job away," said Mr. Bullard, a National Guardsman who worked as a child-care counsellor before he went to war.

In an aircraft banger only weeks ago festooned with flags, balloons and yellow ribbons for returning soldiers, Mr. Bullard and more than 1,000 of his colleagues searched for work Thursday at a job fair organised by navy officials alarmed at the high number of Gulf veterans out of work.

"The largest problem facing returning Desert Storm veterans is far by unemployment," said Navy Commander John W. James. Desert Storm transition director at South Weymouth naval air station near Boston. "If the problem is as widespread nationwide as we know it now is in New England, then we hope job fairs for veterans will become the new focus of public attention."

A navy survey of 300 New England Gulf war veterans found an unemployment rate of 21.5 per cent — more than twice the regional average and three times the national average.

Veterans came to Thursday's job fair from all over New England.

"When the parades are all over and the welcomes are all given out, I still don't have a job," said Antonio Randolph, a navy veteran who flew reconnaissance above the Gulf.

Mr. Randolph is living at home, working part-time in the kitchen of the veterans administration hospital while looking for a better job, and "trying to keep a positive attitude. But the odds are hard to overcome."

Most of the 57 employers at the job fair — among them banks, federal and state agencies and retail stores — had sparse encouragement to offer, their biring plans on hold because of New England's slumping economy.

"By being here, we are at least trying to show we care, but I don't have any jobs to offer," said James Flynn, employment manager for Kaman Aerospace Corporation, which has laid off 600 employees in the last 18 months.

"I'm collecting the resumes," Mr. Flynn said with a gesture towards a five-centimetre pile of neatly typed credentials. "It's sad. It's nice to talk to so many people, but on the other hand I wish they didn't have to be here."

Gary Skellert, a National Guardsman, balanced his year-old daughter, Ashley, in one arm and a pen in the other as he filled out job applications. His employer shut down while Mr. Skellert was in the Gulf.

"Every job I applied for, there were 100 applicants," he said. "All the hoopla's over, and I'm broke. The bills are coming in."

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 Documentary
19:00 News in French
19:15 Varieties
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 The Bill Cosby Show
21:00 Encounter
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature film: "Mommie Dearest"

PRAYER TIMES

03:52 Fajr
05:27 (Sunrise) Doha
12:58 Dhahar
16:19 'Asr
19:29 Maghrib
21:25 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church, Swedisch, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637875
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De In Salla Church Tel. 661757

Terranova Church Tel. 623366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Epiphania Church Tel. 771751

American International Church Tel. 685326

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 813817, 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Slight rise in temperatures will take place and winds will be northerly moderate to fresh. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 18 / 29
Aqaba 26 / 38
Deserts 19 / 33
Jordan Valley 22 / 37

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 28, Aqaba 27. Humidity readings: Amman 60 per cent, Aqaba 28 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Ayman Abdul Jabbar 614222
Dr. Fakhr Abu Tayeh 883880
Dr. Mohammed Al Awad 741391
Dr. Ararat Al Ashhab 602507
First pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asena pharmacy 637053
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salara pharmacy 636720
Yacoub pharmacy 644943
Samsani pharmacy 637660

AMMAN:
Dr. Ali Omari (—)
Al Sibara pharmacy (275825)

ZARQA:
Dr. Hisham Al Sharabati (—)
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 891228
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 63031
Hotel Complaints 605900
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Abdell Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television

Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815613
Electric Power 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussien Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 642816
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 623562
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsi 664714
Shamsi Hospital 669131
University Hospital 645845
Al-Mushar Hospital 657275
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Irbid, Al-Mudajreen 777101/3
Al-Badri, J. Amman 775112/6
Army, Marka 891611/13
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674153

Home News

JORDAN TIMES, SATURDAY, JUNE 29, 1991 3



BISHOP, STUDENTS AWARDED: Their Royal Highnesses Prince Faisal Ibn Al Hussein and Princess Aila Al Faisal attended a ceremony for the graduation of students from the Bishop School



for boys and the Ahliya School for girls and distributed certificates to the graduates. At the ceremony, held at the Palace of Culture, the Prince and Princess also distributed awards to those excelling



in their courses. Prince Faisal later presented Bishop Elna Khouri with the Jordanian Independence Medal of the First Order, which was conferred on him by His Majesty King Hussein.

EC to grant Jordan \$130m aid for development projects

BRUSSELS (J.T.) — Jordan will get nearly \$130 million in aid from the European Community (EC) countries between 1992 and 1994 to help it carry out development projects and public services schemes, according to an agreement signed by the two sides in Brussels Thursday.

Jordan's ambassador to the EC countries, Tala Al Hassan, said in a statement that the aid would be forthcoming under the fourth financial and technical protocol. The funds and technical assistance would mainly benefit water, irrigation, tourism, agriculture, environment, exports and industry as well as science and technology sectors.

Mr. Al Hassan, who signed the protocol for Jordan, said that one

third of the sum would be offered as a grant while the rest would come in the form of soft loan, through the European Investment Bank (EIB).

Mr. Al Hassan paid tribute to the EC countries, which, he said, had provided Jordan with assistance to help it overcome the adverse consequences of the Gulf Crisis.

The three previous protocols between Jordan and the EC had provided for hundreds of millions of dollars, in grants and soft loans, that enabled Jordan to carry out numerous schemes.

Ministerial committee to work towards ending martial law

AMMAN (J.T.) — A special ministerial committee has been formed by the government to work towards ending martial law in Jordan, which has been in effect since 1967, according to a report in the local press Friday.

The report in Al Rai said that Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Transport Ali Suheimat would chair the committee, which was set up by the Council of Ministers on Thursday. The committee comprises the ministers of higher education, finance, municipal and rural affairs, interior and justice.

Jordan assails Israeli practices at ILO meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan has exposed Israel's immoral and inhuman repressive practices against the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories and deplored the continued practices of the Israeli authorities who expropriate lands from the legitimate Arab owners in order to settle Jewish immigrants to Palestine.

Addressing the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) annual meeting, held in Geneva recently, Secretary General of the Ministry of Labour Saleh Khasawneh said Israel was plotting to make demographic changes in the Arab city of Jerusalem and areas surrounding it so as to establish what is called "Greater Jerusalem."

Jordan joins in battle to inform, help diabetics

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan, along with other nations of the world Thursday observed the international day for combating diabetes at a special meeting chaired by Health Minister Mamdouh Al Abbadi in Amman.

There is an urgent need to boost health education in Jordan to enable people to deal with or to protect themselves from diabetes, said the minister in an opening address at the meeting.

Asylum-seeking Iranians sit-in

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Asylum-seeking Iranians stranded in Jordan have launched what they call an indefinite sit-in to support their case at a United Nations agency, which, in turn, is pleading helplessness until the governments of potential shelters for the refugees respond positively to its representation.

Mr. Fonseth told the Jordan Times that UNHCR was in contact with the concerned governments and hoped to hear from them "very soon."

Mr. Hamedani, who was born in a town in central Iran, "We are now fed up with politics and would like to lead normal lives as anyone."

According to Mr. Rezaei and Mr. Hamedani, two of their compatriots stranded in Jordan tried to get into Israel across the demarcation line because of frustration over being stuck here with no definite signs of asylum anywhere.

The sit-in is the second staged by the Iranians, who apparently believe that increased pressure on UNHCR would produce quick action to resolve their problem.

Mr. Fonseth, head of the UNHCR mission here, argues that "we are unable to do anything until the concerned governments respond

positively to our request for asylum for these people."

Mr. Hamedani, who was born in a town in central Iran, "We are now fed up with politics and would like to lead normal lives as anyone."

Police foil major drug trafficking operation

AMMAN (J.T.) — Border police, backed by police helicopters, foiled a major drug trafficking operation and seized 800 kilograms of hashish in arresting the smugglers.

A statement by the Public Security Department (PSD) said that the smugglers were spotted trying to bring into the country a haul of hashish from the northern desert.

Jordan reelected UNCHS member

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan has been elected to a second term as a member of the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements (UNCHS), according to Mr. Youssef Hyayat, director general of the Housing Corporation.

Under its programme, based on the Vancouver plan of action established at the 1976 U.N. Conference on Human Settlements, the centre's major areas of concern are implemented by division and branches grouped under the broad areas of technical cooperation, research, development and policies, shelter and community services, construction and infrastructure and information.

Festival hoping to revive interest in theatre

By Maha Addasi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordan Theatre Festival Committee in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture Thursday started a two-week theatre festival, to mark the 25th anniversary since the establishment of the Jordanian theatre.

8,000 people, but today, probably due to alternative means of entertainment, like television, we lost most of our audience. Only a few hundred people attend theatre today," Mr. Snobar said.

to be presented by University of Jordan and by the Jordan University of Science and Technology.

is the Abdul Hamid Sharaf award, of JD 4,000 to be given each year for the most deserving theatre activity. The late Mr. Sharaf established the Theatre Artist's Committee 25 years ago.

Home News in Brief

Jordan, Romania discuss oil cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Thabab Al Taher Thursday received the Romanian Charge d'Affaires Petre Popescu, Mr. Taher and Mr. Popescu discussed ways of promoting and bolstering cooperation between Jordan and Romania in the field of oil exploration.

Minister inspects NAF

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Social Development Awni Al Bashir Thursday inspected work procedures at the National Aid Fund (NAF) where he met NAF Director General Farouq Badran. Dr. Bashir got acquainted to the services the fund provides for needy families in the Kingdom.

Workshop for charities to be held

KARAK (Petra) — A workshop for chairmen, presidents and secretaries of charitable societies in the Karak Governorate will be held here Monday. The workshop, which is organised by the Social Development Department in cooperation with the General Union of Voluntary Societies in Karak, aims at enhancing cooperation among the societies in the governorate.

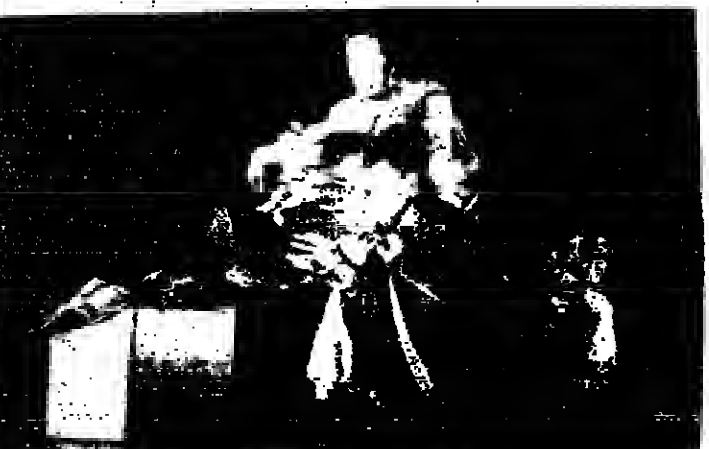
WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- An exhibition of paintings and sculptures by Showqi Shoukhi, Mhhammad Al Jalous and Rifqi Al Razzaq at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation 10 a.m. — 5 p.m.
- Photo exhibition by Hans Richter at the Goethe Institute.
- Poster exhibition at the British Council.
- Ceramics exhibition by Margaret Tadros and Najwa Annab at the Spanish Cultural Centre between June 17-30.

FILMS

- German film entitled "Die Macht der Gefühle" (The Power of Feelings) — English-subtitled — at the Goethe Institute — 8 p.m.
- French film entitled "Les Granges Brulées" at the French Cultural Centre — 8 p.m.



Two scenes from the play "The Wedding of the Weddings" that sets off the two-week theatre festival in Amman (file photos)



YUWA
FOR THE YOUNG
AT THE YUWA SECRETARIAT GENERAL

FOR THE FOLLOWING COURSES TAUGHT IN ENGLISH

1. SHORTHAND
2. COMMERCE
3. OFFICE PRACTICE (Secretarial Duties)
4. BUSINESS LETTERS
5. ENGLISH LANGUAGE
6. BOOK - KEEPING

INTERESTED APPLICANTS SHOULD :-

1. BE a graduate with a B.A. degree or its equivalence.
2. HAVE 2 years experience.
3. BE a Jordanian citizen.

Applications should be submitted to the YUWA center, Jabel Amman, 3rd circle, between June 29, 1991 - July 10, 1991.

For more information please contact the YUWA Office
Tel. 055475 or 041799.

Jordan Times

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Right of exchange

IN WELCOMING newspaper editors who visited with him Thursday evening, the prime minister said he was happy to see old friends whom he had dealt with as foreign minister deputy and private citizen for many years. Mr. Masri only wanted to answer any questions they had concerning the new government. He also wanted to hear their opinions on what was going on.

"Journalists generally like to ask questions more than they do volunteering opinions," one editor said. "But if you really want to know what we think, here is some of our food for your thought."

For over two hours, the prime minister and the journalists talked openly and frankly to each other. Mr. Masri reviewed at length the objective of his government, its make-up and the circumstances surrounding its formation. He was as honest, open and forthcoming as he had ever been. The editors reciprocated with great interest and warmth. Besides being able to slant coverage of news closer towards their convictions and opinions, whether on this government or otherwise, editorialising at will, they also wanted to express themselves personally and from close range. They went as far as time allowed.

It is no secret that the Jordanian press has generally been supportive of and enthusiastic about the appointment of Mr. Masri as prime minister and his choice of colleagues. They are credible, able and progressive. Their programmes, as outlined in His Majesty the King's letter of appointment and Mr. Masri's acceptance reply, epitomised and embodied Jordan's hopes and aspirations. Furthermore their decision to submit to parliament for a vote of confidence in less than four weeks, even though they did not have to for a few more months, added to the journalists' confidence and trust in the new team.

But, characteristically enough, the editors did not stop at that, they went on to expound on what they thought were the reasons for the negative reaction the Masri cabinet received from certain political salons in Amman and sceptics on the streets.

There was a consensus amongst them that only those who are blinkered by factionalism and tribalism could not give the new prime minister and the ministers the benefit of the doubt. Only the opportunists did not wish to give the chance to the new blood to prove its worth. And that only the reactionary forces withheld support from the forward looking, progressive cabinet that was named basically to implement reforms and speed up the country's development process.

Many citizens have been apathetic about the change, the prime minister was further told. But that was also the case with many previous governments, and something had to be done to convince Jordanians of the value of partnership with the executive branch and local authorities wherever they may be. Restoring public confidence in the ability of governments to lead and to come clean was no small feat, everybody now agrees, even though the most important issue remains how this particular cabinet plays its cards with the disenchanted, disinterested citizen and the public at large.

The Thursday exchange did not end in the prime minister and newspaper editors sealing agreement over every issue of mutual concern. On the contrary, the premier made some interesting and critical comments on Jordanian newspapers, and the journalists warned him to brace for accountability and criticism whenever the occasion arose. Time will tell how our press will interact with this government from this point on. Democracy, however, is at its best when it is a two-way street.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Friday warned the public against Israel's attempts to strike against the Jordanian national unity. It is no secret that the Israelis aim at disrupting such unity through harmful rumours and false reports, said the daily in an editorial. Statements by Foreign Minister David Levy in Spain about plans to get rid of the Islamic movement in Jordan were just one example of Israel's constant efforts to undermine the national unity of this country, said the paper. All the movements and political groups in the Kingdom are clearly directing their activities against the Israeli aggressors, and it is not strange for an Israeli minister to try to cause rifts among these movements in order to weaken the Jordanian national front, said the paper. Furthermore, the leadership in Jordan is known to be firm in all matters related to the common enemy and national commitments; and is bound to help deal with the Israeli attempts to tamper with the country's national position. The paper said cohesion among the people of Jordan and its various groups and political orientations can foil Israel's evil designs and preserve Jordan as a bastion of democracy and a strong fortress in the face of the common enemy.

Al Dustour tackled the undercover and secret operations of the Israeli military against the defenceless Palestinian population. Latest reports from the occupied territories confirm that the Israeli authorities have killed 47 innocent Palestinian youths through such undercover operations and committed a series of other atrocities since the start of the intifada, the paper noted. These atrocities and murders in cold blood which continue unabated are being committed at a time when the western nations raise the human rights slogans and talk about democracy and the rights of all peoples to freedom, the paper noted. It said the new massacres committed by the new Nazis in the occupied Palestinian land, constitute a continuation of those massacres committed in Deir Yassin and other areas of Palestine. The paper said that these crimes against Palestinians present a clear vindication to the Palestinian intifada which had been earlier accused by the Israelis of murdering Palestinians under the pretext of being collaborators with the enemy. The paper expressed deep pain and distress over the victims of Israel's criminal actions, and called on the intifada leaders to remain vigilant, and on the Palestinians to unify their ranks in the face of this new onslaught.

Step by step in Gaza

By Katia Sabat

GAZA STRIP — A vast camp some 40 kilometres long and 8 kilometres wide, surrounded by barbed wire and patrolled day and night by the military: this is the Gaza Strip. Its 650,000-700,000 inhabitants are crowded into seven refugee camps and two towns — Rafah and Gaza — and it has a population density of 4,200 people per square mile, compared with 400 for Palestinians on the West Bank. It is small wonder that in 1987 the poverty and frustration of the youth of the teeming towns and refugee camps, set up in 1948, exploded in the intifada — "the war of the stones."

Various described as a pressure cooker or a time bomb, Gaza was the cradle of the 4-year-old uprising against the Israeli occupiers. Any visitor to the area can sense the tension that permeates the crowded, dusty alleys where no trees grow and ragged children scamp.

As he slowly walks along the ugly, cinder-block lined streets of Gaza City, where walls are covered in graffiti and pockmarked by bullets, Freih Abu Meddein is stopped every few yards. People come up to him, he listens attentively to their anxious questions and quietly gives advice.

Lawyer Abu Meddein, 44, is known to all in Gaza. Now chairman of the Gaza Bar Association, he has devoted recent years of his life to the Palestinian cause, defending compatriots and drawing on his legal expertise to argue the case of his people. Abu Meddein is one of a new generation of moderate and pragmatic Palestinian leaders "from inside," who is respected both by the "exiled authorities" (the Tunis-based leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation — PLO), as well as ordinary Palestinians living under occupation. Abu Meddein recently spoke of prospects for peace.

"The Palestinian-Israeli peace process is a slow one and it will remain slow. The only positive developments until now are the declarations that have been made about Israeli settlements in the occupied territories," he said, referring to widespread, and particularly American, criticism of Israel's policy to expand Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

"Peace talks could go on for years," added the lawyer, "and they will become more and more difficult if this colonisation does not stop." This is not only a question of principle, as some may think, it is also a human problem, he noted. "New settlements may not be a major concern in Gaza since there are only 2,000 or 2,500 settlers here who constitute sort of a little cushion between Israel and Egypt. The real problem is in the West Bank, where some settlements are fast growing into real towns. The settlements around Jerusalem are an added complication when it comes to the peace process. The more settlers there are, the smaller the chances are for an agreement. There are now some 120,000 to 130,000 Jewish settlers — not to mention the fact that I would imagine 10 to 15 per cent of the two million Soviet Jews who are expected to arrive in Israel will also settle in the occupied territories."

Yet Abu Meddein believes the settlement question must not get in the way of the peace process. "We must not lose time. We have to bring the various sides to the negotiating table, without preconditions, without hesitation. That is when the world will be able to judge."

"Time is running out," he added, with a sense of urgency. "We have missed several opportunities in the past. If we had listened to (the late Egyptian president) Sadat, for example, there would be a Palestinian nation today. The current situation is perhaps our last chance to achieve a positive result in the Middle East."

Abu Meddein recently returned from a seminar in the Spanish town of Granada that was attended by Palestinians, other Arabs, Israelis and Westerners. "I had the opportunity of raising some problems that are not widely understood abroad," he said of the meeting. "For example, we will soon run out of drinking water in Gaza. In addition, the population density in the Strip is already one of the highest in the world and soon there will be no room for everyone. Since the end of the Gulf war, the economic situation has seriously deteriorated for a number of reasons. In short, we have reached a point where we — both sides — have got to do something once and for all."

But "psychological bridges" will have to be built to overcome the lack of trust between Israelis and Palestinians if the peace process is to be advanced, he be-

lieves. "There has been bloodshed on both sides. There is hatred, and that is why I think the peace talks will be long and drawn out," he added. "The Palestinians don't have much to offer the Israelis apart from peace in the entire region. As long as that is clear, something can come out of negotiations."

When hundreds of thousands of people live in overcrowded, festering conditions, with no prospects for the future and nothing to lose, they become dangerous, even if they have no weapons. "These days, the Israelis live in fear. They are anxious about their homes, their children, their lives. Nothing can change that except peace. There is nothing left but the negotiating table," said Abu Meddein. Commenting on the recent efforts by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker to reactivate the peace process, Abu Meddein is clear: "Baker is a practical man who understands the situation perfectly. Where I do not agree with him is when he talks about two processes: Arab-Israeli peace and Palestinian-Israeli peace. Peace cannot be obtained along two lines. The Palestinians have to be there with the rest of the Arabs. Dealing with the Arabs alone, without the Palestinians, cannot lead to a real peace for the region."

The Palestinian lawyer, who met the U.S. secretary on two occasions during the latter's recent visits to the region, sees Baker as a secretive man: he is short on declarations and big on his desire for a step forward. "I feel sure he is prepared to tug at both sides until he gets them to sit at the same table. What comes after in terms of the content of the negotiations, what will be accepted and rejected, will come in stages, each in its own time."

Abu Meddein is also convinced that a certain amount of pressure from President George Bush could greatly speed up and simplify the peace process. "Think

about 1956 war," he said, referring to the joint French, British and Israeli attack in a response to President Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal. "We reminded Mr. Baker that in 1956 it took President Eisenhower 80 days to force France, Britain and Israel to withdraw from Egyptian territory. Bush is in the same position of power. He too, like Eisenhower is a 'winner.' It is in his power to impose his will on Israel, if he wanted to."

Meanwhile, Abu Meddein admits that the Arab countries, including Egypt, still have a lot of work to do to reach greater understanding among themselves before the peace process can really move forward. "I have heard that there have been contacts 'at the highest levels' between Egypt and the PLO to clear up some of the 'misunderstandings' caused by the Gulf war. There is a vital need for agreement between the PLO and three countries of our region: Syria, Jordan and of course Egypt. This is what the PLO is now trying to rebuild."

Abu Meddein is equally aware that greater harmony is needed among Palestinians themselves and that a pragmatic solution may not be to the satisfaction of all. "It is very difficult to reach a final agreement that everyone will accept," he said. Democracy is hardly the main virtue of the Arab World and the middle East. The Third World as a whole has always suffered from the lack of cohesion and consensus, and the Palestinians are no exception. The Islamic factions do not agree with us and others will settle for nothing less than a sovereign state with fully defined borders. There is a chance of friction among the Palestinians, but in the end, the majority will decide."

Abu Meddein advocates a "step by step" approach that, he said, should start with the recognition of certain elementary and inalienable rights: "There are five million of us, between those in the region and those who live abroad. There are 65 indepen-

dent nations in the world with population smaller than ours, and we have been living for decades without rights, without a face. Instead of passports, we have stateless passes. In the occupied territories we are treated like fourth-rate citizens."

"We want basic rights, to which every human being is entitled: independence and self-determination. The rest will come, smoothly, little by little. It could be a confederation, an independent state... it is too early to talk about it. The main thing now is to get to the negotiating table, and we Palestinians are ready to be flexible. The other side has to be flexible too, and it is up to the West, Europe and the U.S. to exercise the necessary pressure to reach a solution agreeable to all."

The rights advocate also believes that Israeli intransigence and the difficulties that may arise if the Jewish leaders impose preconditions can be overcome, since the rights of the Palestinians have been confirmed by multitudes of United Nations decisions. "We understand that Israel does not want the U.N. to take any part in the negotiations because it could lead in our favour. But rights are rights and resolutions are resolutions, regardless of whether the U.N. is there or not," he said.

He dismisses Israel's demands concerning the composition of a Palestinian delegation and its rejection of participants from the PLO, East Jerusalem and the diaspora: "You can't bury a problem by distancing individuals," he says.

Unlike many other Palestinian politicians involved in the current process, Abu Meddein remains resolutely optimistic: "I don't think anything can stop our efforts or activities. I get the feeling an irreversible process has been put into motion. In any case, optimism or pessimism is a question of emotions. What is vital here is to make progress and reach our goal." — World News Link.

Hanan Ashrawi: Palestinian on a peace mission

By Katia Sabat

RAMALLAH. Occupied West Bank — Hanan Ashrawi, the only female Palestinian representative with whom Secretary of State James Baker spoke during the most recent Palestinian — U.S. talks on the Middle East, describes herself as "a Palestinian woman born with a mission." Dr. Ashrawi brings both professional and personal credentials to her position as a Palestinian activist. After serving four years as dean of the University of Bir Zeit (on the West Bank) she now teaches comparative English literature there. Married, with two daughters, Ashrawi says that her husband is "a very liberal man who is convinced of the equality of the sexes." Since 1967 she has fulfilled what she considers the most important of her tasks.

"1967 and the occupation of our territories marked the turning point, when what had been just words in the mouths of our elders became a reality that affected us all. At that moment a bond was created between the older and younger generations, a sort of handing down of responsibility, especially when we realised that the previous generation had not obtained the results that they had hoped for."

Hanan Ashrawi, part of that new generation, felt a deep responsibility towards "those who follow," the children. Each person should give as much as he or she is capable of, she said, in the climate of renewal that owes much, if not all, to the intifada.

"The intifada was a significant turning point in our history," she says. "Things have happened that have enabled us to look at realities in the light of day."

That doesn't mean that Ashrawi looks at the current situation with unbridled optimism. "I met with Baker three times and I would say that the circumstances are not favourable to us. Israel is doing everything in its power to impede the beginning of the peace process. She has particularly tried to discourage and annoy the Palestinians, either politically, with the fait accompli of its settlements, or with actions that are illegal — administrative, detention, expulsions, jailings, and so on. All that is being done with the goal of provoking violent reactions and a general atmosphere of violence. In my opinion, we shouldn't react to Israeli provocation because then we are playing their game. On the contrary, we should continue on the path of peace initiatives."

On the matter of Palestinian participation in the Middle East peace process, Ashrawi admits that the conditions imposed by

Israel are creating pessimism among those seeking a settlement. But at the same time she takes a philosophical and realistic look at the situation. "The peace process is aimed at determining our future, thus it is inconceivable that we should be excluded from the political arena where our future is discussed. We ask for self-determination, and we ourselves want to delineate and discuss our rights," she says.

The Israeli refusal to allow the United Nations or the European Community to participate in a conference on the Middle East, secret discussions on shape of the conference itself, the rejection of this or that representative are, according to Hanan Ashrawi, procedural matters that Israel is advancing with the sole aim of discouraging Palestinian participation and gaining time. Ashrawi doesn't consider the American position to be any more encouraging.

"The United States cannot — I really do not know whether they cannot or will not — put an end to or at least curtail the ambitions of the Israelis. They seem to 'absorb' the ideas and conditions presented by Israel, and these then become an integral part of the American position. Each step in the peace process is seen by the United States across a spectrum in which Israeli interests and acceptance are first and foremost. This partiality is not encouraging considering that Israel has accepted nothing."

Ashrawi believes that a juridical approach to the Palestinian question, based on international law, is essential. "When the Palestinians talk about their inalienable international rights, they are not just mouthing slogans, they are talking about reality. Our only true recourse in the international community is based on the resolutions of the U.N. We take those resolutions seriously. We don't look at them as merely historical documents. We ask only that a process be started under which the resolutions that have been passed by representatives of the international community can be put into action. The Palestinian position is very clear and simple."

In the occupied territories as well as among the Palestinians who live elsewhere there is a pluralism in the overall political climate as well as in individual opinions. Ashrawi doesn't consider that a handicap: "With freedom of expression and reciprocal respect for opinions we have instituted a kind of internal democracy. Perhaps there is not unanimity but we conduct ourselves on majority rule. That is enough in a

democratic society."

But even in the face of internal dissension there is unanimity regarding representation. "In the PLO," says Hanan Ashrawi, "the fundamentals on which all Palestinians are united are clear: no decisions on our future without our presence at the negotiating table. Right now the PLO is undergoing a period of discussion, exploration, in-depth study and a search for a truly comprehensive picture of the problem that will lead us to concrete and positive results in the matter of Palestinian rights. Firm decisions have not been made, but, considering Israel's attitude, we can say that the ball is out in our court. The PLO has shown flexibility and a sense of responsibility in its approach to the problem and has demonstrated its intent to be in the forefront of the peace process. From even Baker's viewpoint, if today there are difficulties and obstacles in that process, they are the work of Israel."

The political action programme of the Palestinians is clear and is based essentially on the resolutions of the Palestine National Council issued in November 1988. "Our position is based on a Palestinian initiative for peace, acceptance of the sharing of the land and a reciprocal recognition of the two states. We also ask that Israel leave all territories that she had illegally occupied in defiance of international law. These include not only the Palestinian territories but the Golan Heights, Lebanon, and so on. Further, we ask that the United Nations participate in the Middle East peace process. The European community should also be present politically, not only for matters of human rights or economic relations."

Ashrawi retains confidence in a positive, even slow, evolution of all aspects of the situation, but always keeping in mind that the situation can change. "The phase that we are living through is delicate and difficult because there is undoubtedly a tendency to establish in the region a stability that will not necessarily take into account the rights of the Palestinians. But we are not opposed to strategy in stages: we are perfectly well aware of the fact that the goal we seek can come into being only gradually. We are no longer irredentists who, after having obtained what we claimed today will then try to reclaim the rest of Palestine. That political stand is finished, over. A strategy for peace, this is the Palestinians' moral stand today." — World News Link.

The week in print

The new government in Jordan, its plans for the future and what people expect from its members to do in the coming stage acquired the lion's share in local newspapers coverage of local events in the media in the past week.

We have to admit that the new government of Prime Minister Taher Masri is in for a very complicated set of challenges, and bound to face ferocious battle in tackling the deteriorating economic conditions in Jordan and in fending off the external pressure being exerted on the Kingdom, said Saleh Qallab, a columnist in Al Dustour.

The writer said the most ferocious battle this new government would have to face is perhaps the one against those trying to sow seeds of dissension and discord within the ranks of the Jordanian family. Several columnists presented their own views and made different demands of the new government, with Issa Shuaibi voicing his belief that the new government would not be able to solve all issues overnight but at least it can do something related to political life in Jordan.

Writing in Sawt Al Shaab, Issa Shuaibi said that the government is of course facing such issues as unemployment, inflation, pollution and others but can now embark on exacting laws related to political pluralism and press and publication which can help it in the future stage to tackle the other problems.

Another columnist in Al Dustour demanded that the government deal first with the question of soaring prices of almost every item in the market because they are of concern to all members of the Jordanian society. Unless the government directs its attention to internal issues, matters will be further complicated and the situation will deteriorate, said Mohammad Ibrahim Daoud.

A columnist in Sawt Al Shaab demanded that the government turn its prime attention to the tourism industry in implementing the directives of His Majesty King Hussein contained in the letter of designation to the government. Suleiman Bedour said that the government ought to support the work of Royal Jordanian and transform it into a public share holding company to boost its operations and improve its services in the tourism field.

Writing in Al Ra'i daily, Mahmoud Al Rimawi expressed his belief that the new government would adhere strictly to the implementation of the National Charter which provided an umbrella for all political and economic activity in Jordan. Rimawi said despite the various speculations about the new government's tendencies and future plans, and despite criticism directed against several members of the cabinet, no one can doubt the fact that Taher Masri's main task will be to implement the King's directives in the letter and the spirit, and will give due concern to the question of handling the Arab-Israeli issue as well as internal questions.

Abdullah Al Qaq, a guest columnist in Al Dustour, demanded that the new government find ways for absorbing thousands of students returning from Kuwait into Jordanian universities. The writer said that in his letter to the new government, the King has asked that the returning expatriates be given due attention and care especially after being exposed to many sufferings in the Gulf.

Saleh Qallab criticised those who were not satisfied with the appointment of a man of Palestinian origin as prime minister in Jordan, and said that such dissatisfaction emanates from narrow mindedness, backwardness and lack of common sense. Qallab cited the examples of the president of Argentina who is of Syrian origin, Philip Habib a noted American administration counsellor from Lebanon and others who assumed significant positions in other countries, and said that the Jordanian-Palestinian community forms a united family regardless of their backgrounds and their place of origin. The writer attacked those elements which, he said, were only clever in levelling accusations or criticisms of others without themselves offering constructive contribution to their country.

Columnist Hamad Farassan who writes in Al Dustour said that the outgoing government succeeded in unifying the country's stand vis-à-vis the U.S.-Zionist aggression on Iraq but failed to introduce

the spirit of team work within the government departments. The writer said that certain centres of power continued under Prime Minister Mudar Badran to have influence, and certain decisions were taken by certain officials without any collective consent.

What we need now, he said, is to work in the spirit of the National Charter and implement the King's directives which were in harmony with that charter.

Ahmad Dhahab, who writes in Sawt Al Shaab daily, said that whenever a government is changed in Jordan new ministers resort to certain measures that most often harm the interests of the junior public servants and government officials. The writer said that there must be criteria to control such mechanism and there must be certain measures to protect officials from arbitrary or rash decisions taken by new ministers.

His views are backed by Salameh Ekoru who also writes for Sawt Al Shaab. Whenever a minister or a director of a certain department realises that he is leaving his post soon, he tends to take a number of decisions which can only serve his own selfish interests like appointing his relatives in certain posts or passing a number of decisions which result in harmful consequences to a great number of people.

The writer suggested that the new ministers or heads of departments should restrict all such decisions and enact a set of regulations preventing such occurrence in the future so as to put an end to tampering with the state's institutions and national interests.

Taher Al Udwan who writes for Al Dustour launched a bitter attack on those parliament members who, he said, have done nothing over the past two years except to act in a manner to improve their own image for future elections. Udwan said that most of the deputies had presented the electorate with a long list of actions which they said they would embark on, such as fighting corruption, but once they were elected their attention was directed elsewhere.

The writer said democracy requires the presence of new blood and any public official ought to submit a resume, subject to scrutiny, featuring his past political life and clearly stating the manner in which he had massed his wealth before being allowed to assume any post.

Mousa Kilani, chief editor of Al Dustour demanded from the government to enact laws allowing members of the Armed Forces and Public Security to vote in general elections. The writer said that soldiers and policemen are only members of the public, and together with their families constitute some 27 per cent of the total volume of the Jordanian population. Merchants, businessmen, employees and others are all tax-payers and so, they are allowed to vote, but soldiers pay the heaviest tax, that of their lives, and so they deserve being counted within the Jordanian electorate, the writer stressed.

A columnist in Al Ra'i noted that every year Jordan's population increases by 140,000, amounting to the number of a whole district like the Karak Governorate. Writing under the name of "observer," the columnist noted that Jordanians would need extra amounts of water, nearly 1,200 million cubic metres annually by the end of the century should the population growth continue, but the country is unable to provide the 730 million cubic metres for the present population.

The writer said more people need more food, more facilities for life, education and social services which the country would find itself unable to provide. He called on families to adopt the birth spacing method to prevent population explosion.

Several columnists discussed the plight of Palestinians and Jordanians in Kuwait. Dr. Omar Abu Sobeih said that international organisations and human rights groups have condemned the inhuman treatment of non-Kuwaiti nationals and the sham trials they are exposed to in Kuwait.

Bader Abdul Haq, who writes for Al Ra'i, said that those Kuwaitis trying to leave the country had fled the country at the start of the Iraqi occupation only to return and find a scapegoat for their own weaknesses and take revenge on the innocent people who had built the emirate over the past decades.

Government to seek early confidence vote

(Continued from page 1)

"The social and economic imbalance is the outcome of the weak general structure," he said. "Most of our problems are administrative, and the press and media have a great role to play in educating people of their duties," Mr. Masri said.

Other issues which would receive priority on the government's agenda are water and health service problems, unemployment and the economy, he said.

The government will also direct special attention to totally eliminating martial law, he said.

Mr. Masri said Jordan is still passing through a difficult economic time given the fact that Arab aid has been discontinued and expatriate remittances have dwindled.

"Reviving the economy is not an easy task at all," he said.

The large number of university and community college graduates and the hundreds of thousands of Jordanians returning from the Gulf are contributing to the difficult economic and social situation, he said.

"We have no major, clear-cut solutions to address these problems," he said. "However, there are attempts to attract foreign investments and these entails reviving the various sectors."

Mr. Masri called for social solidarity to avoid further rise in the poverty line, which reached a dangerous level.

He said there are proposals and ideas designed to attract foreign investments. Such proposals include easing the restrictions on investment in Jordan, introducing administrative reforms and easing bureaucracy, he said.

Unemployment, Mr. Masri said, is an endemic disease in the Third World and in Europe. It dates back to the 1970s, and will not be eradicated as long as social imbalance is there, he said. "It does not make any sense that 50,000 Jordanians are unemployed at a time when we have 200,000 non-Jordanian workers," he said.

Repairing the imbalance warrants an educational approach and an integrated plan, which should not be the responsibility of the government alone, he said. Mr. Masri noted that these problems can only be solved through intensified efforts of both the public and the private sectors. However, the government has long and short term plans for overcoming the unemployment problem, he said.

Mr. Masri said he could not discuss the issue of developing the armed forces, "because the

army knows its situation better." However, he noted, there are political guidelines which would be finalised in due course.

The prime minister said Jordan was adhering to United Nations Security Council resolutions and that it had obtained a permission from the sanctions committee to export foodstuffs to Iraq and to import oil from Iraq. Inspection of vessels heading for Jordan, the prime minister said, "is now much less than before, thanks to our contacts with the countries concerned."

Mr. Masri said Jordan's position demands that it maintain good relations with the Arab neighbours. He noted that Jordan has lived through the Gulf crisis and "came out of it with its head high."

Jordan's position towards the Gulf crisis will be recorded, in terms of its adherence to the principles and its democratic march," he said. "We are fully convinced that democracy is the feature of the age and that it will be sweeping the region sooner or later."

"We pray to God that Jordan's Democratic experiment will be a model for democracy in the region," he said.

Jordan's decision to sever administrative and legal ties with

the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Masri said, "is irrevocable and will not be reconsidered at all."

This is a closed file," he said. Jordan and the PLO are in full agreement on the composition of the delegation to an international peace conference, he said.

"We will take the right decision at the right time on this subject," he said.

"We will not differ with the PLO over the composition of the delegation once Israel accepts to abide by international legitimacy and accept its land-for-peace principle," he said.

Mr. Masri said there were no new developments on the American side. "The peace process is still stalemated because of Israel's intransigence, and its building of settlements in the occupied territories to create a new situation and a new reality on the ground," he said.

"Israel is bargaining to gain time and does not want to make peace. It aims at invalidating international legitimacy."

Nothing new has come up after U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's last visit to the region, he said. "But we have been hearing tougher statements by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and other Israeli officials," he said.

Survey shows exchange fees burn up holiday money of EC tourists

BRUSSELS (UPI) — A Belgian hitch-hiker across the European Community (EC) with 50,000 francs (\$1,400) in his pocket. He slept in the street, bought nothing — not even food — and still went home with only half of his money.

He was not robbed by thugs. All the money was taken in fees by banks and high-street exchange booths as he changed his cash to local currencies at each stop in the 12 EC countries.

The year is a plausible one, based on facts exposed in a survey by the European consumer lobby BEUC, which says banks and money-changers make holiday and travel a "transborder rip-off" in the EC.

BEUC, which groups Europe's national consumer organisations, says the single EC market due to

be in place by the end of next year has yet to prove it has something to offer consumers.

Whether they use cash, travellers' cheques or credit-cards, hidden rules and tricky exchange rates mean people pay dearly to change and spend money abroad and are left in the dark as to why.

The survey was requested by the European Commission in Brussels, which has been pressing the financial sector for more than two years to reduce costs and explain them more.

It shows an Italian visiting the tulip-fields of Amsterdam would do better to buy his guilders at home than to change his lire at a bank in the Netherlands, where he will pay an average 6.4 per cent more.

For Germans and French, the

reverse is often the case. A German will save well over a tenth of his money if he waits until arriving on a Greek island before changing cash.

At London's Victoria station he will lose the equivalent of one pound in five if he changes his marks into pounds and back at the central exchange kiosk, says BEUC's 60-page study.

And if travellers' cheques are safer than cash, they are also dearer to convert.

German banks can charge a casual tourist up to 15 marks (more than \$8) just to cash a cheque — poor value for the visitor with cheques worth only \$20 a piece.

Life grows more complicated when it comes to using credit cards or other types of plastic

cards because of the widely varying, often labyrinthine and usually unclear terms attached to using them.

EC Consumer Affairs Commissioner Karel van Miert said the BEUC study showed action was needed and said big companies such as Visa and Eurocard should explain the large differences in charges.

In some countries the corner shop will accept your card in payment for a book and a packet of cigarettes and in others you may be limited to cash conversion in banks and bigger stores.

But almost everywhere there are minimum commissions and conversion fees which the consumer is unaware of and would find hard to tally even if they were explained, says BEUC.

Yugoslav jets blast Slovenia

(Continued from page 1)

Jana, said there were no such attacks.

Witnesses said that federal planes bombed a column of cars near Maribor, most of them apparently Turks and Bulgarians waiting to cross into nearby Austria. But there was no independent confirmation.

Meanwhile, European Community leaders meeting in Luxembourg decided to freeze millions of dollars of aid to Yugoslavia and dispatched a mediation mission to try to prevent the scattered fighting from escalating into civil war.

The foreign ministers of Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands left Friday afternoon for Belgrade, EC officials said.

Sbakeo but unbowed, President Milan Kucan of Slovenia said his government was "open for negotiations" with federal authorities but only "after this hor-

ror is ended on Slovene territory."

In Prague, Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Jiri Dienstbier said officials of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) were likely to hold a first crisis management session next week to discuss the conflict.

In Ljubljana, police said two jets pounded Brnik airport outside the city on Friday morning with bursts of cannon or machine-gun fire.

A hangar, two small aircraft of Slovenia's Air Adria carrier and two other buildings were destroyed. The runway and control tower were not hit and there were no reports of casualties.

Slovenian Interior Minister Igor Bavcar said army planes had launched bombing attacks on columns of civilian cars at border crossings.

Witnesses of the Trebnje attack said air force jets opened fire on trucks halted by a roadblock after swooping low over the convoy.

The air attacks marked an escalation in federal military pressure on Slovenia, most westernised of Yugoslavia's republics and home to two million people.

The feud intensified despite a new call overnight for peace by the federal government which is facing the collapse of the Balkan federation of six republics and two provinces after 72 troubled years.

Western officials fear the conflict could degenerate into ethnic warring awakening old rivalries between the well-to-do Slovenes and Croats on the one hand and the country's majority Serbs.

Serbs account for more than eight million out of the 23 million population and dominate the army and government structure.

Algeria in turmoil

(Continued from page 1)

The gunfire followed two days of violence which brought the army back to the streets of the capital. The military threatened tough action against troublemakers at Friday prayers.

Fifteen people were killed and scores wounded in Algiers and two other towns of Tuesday and Wednesday, raising the official death toll to at least 36. Diplomats say between 55 and 65 people have been killed.

The British and French embassies warned their nationals to keep away from trouble spots on Friday and avoid unnecessary journeys, a diplomatic source said. The U.S. embassy advised staff to stay away from the area.

Fundamentalists mounted their latest challenge to the military less than 20 minutes after the start of the 11 p.m. to 3.30 a.m. curfew.

"For Islam we live, for Islam we will die," shouted small groups of youths in one fundamentalist stronghold. Mosque loudspeakers blared "allahu akbar" and saucers banging — a traditional method of public protest — spread through city districts.

The military threatened on Thursday to take tough action against troublemakers during weekly prayers. The new prime minister, Sid Ahmad Ghazali went on television just before midnight and vowed: "The state will not tolerate anarchy taking over. Order will be maintained and security preserved."

Militants built new barricades of concrete blocks, metal and fishboxes, blocking Bab Al Oued's main Maring Road.

More barricades blocked streets in the casbah, part of the old city centre.

In the district of Belcourt, where many FIS hardliners live, smoke rose from rubbish strewn every 100 metres across a main road and set ablaze.

Strike

(Continued from page 1)

West Bank village to protest the killing of a 61-year-old Palestinian who was kidnapped and tortured as an accused collaborator, Arab reports said Friday.

The action by the three main factions of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in the village of Arabeh was the latest protest in the West Bank and Gaza Strip over killings by masked activists in the uprising.

In Arabeh, about 15 Palestinian youths marched to the village mosque Thursday night to protest the slaying of Adel Ahmad Saadat, 61, whose body was found with signs of torture and cigarette burns, Arab reporters said.

Eight masked activists from a group called the Black Panthers kidnapped Saadat from the village near Jenin earlier Thursday, the reporters said.

Bush: Iraq violated ceasefire

(Continued from page 1)

under U.N. jurisdiction, and that's exactly what (Iraq) appears to have done," said Mr. Bush. Referring to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, he said, "The man has no shame."

Under the terms of the April 3 ceasefire resolution adopted by the U.N., Iraq must disclose the sites of all its nuclear facilities, and chemical and biological weapons and permit inspection.

"What do you do about it... work through diplomacy" at the United Nations, Mr. Bush said. "Don't press me beyond that. I am not prepared to say what we'll do" if the violation continues.

"Some would argue that the U.N. resolution gives... all means necessary" to enforce the ceasefire, he said.

The Bush administration, responding to allegations Iraq is hiding significant amounts of nuclear weapons, has ordered the Defence Department to draw up plans for military strikes on possi-

ble caches, the Los Angeles Times said Friday.

In a report from Washington quoting unidentified administration officials, the newspaper said concern over the reported Iraqi nuclear capability had reached feverish levels since early this month.

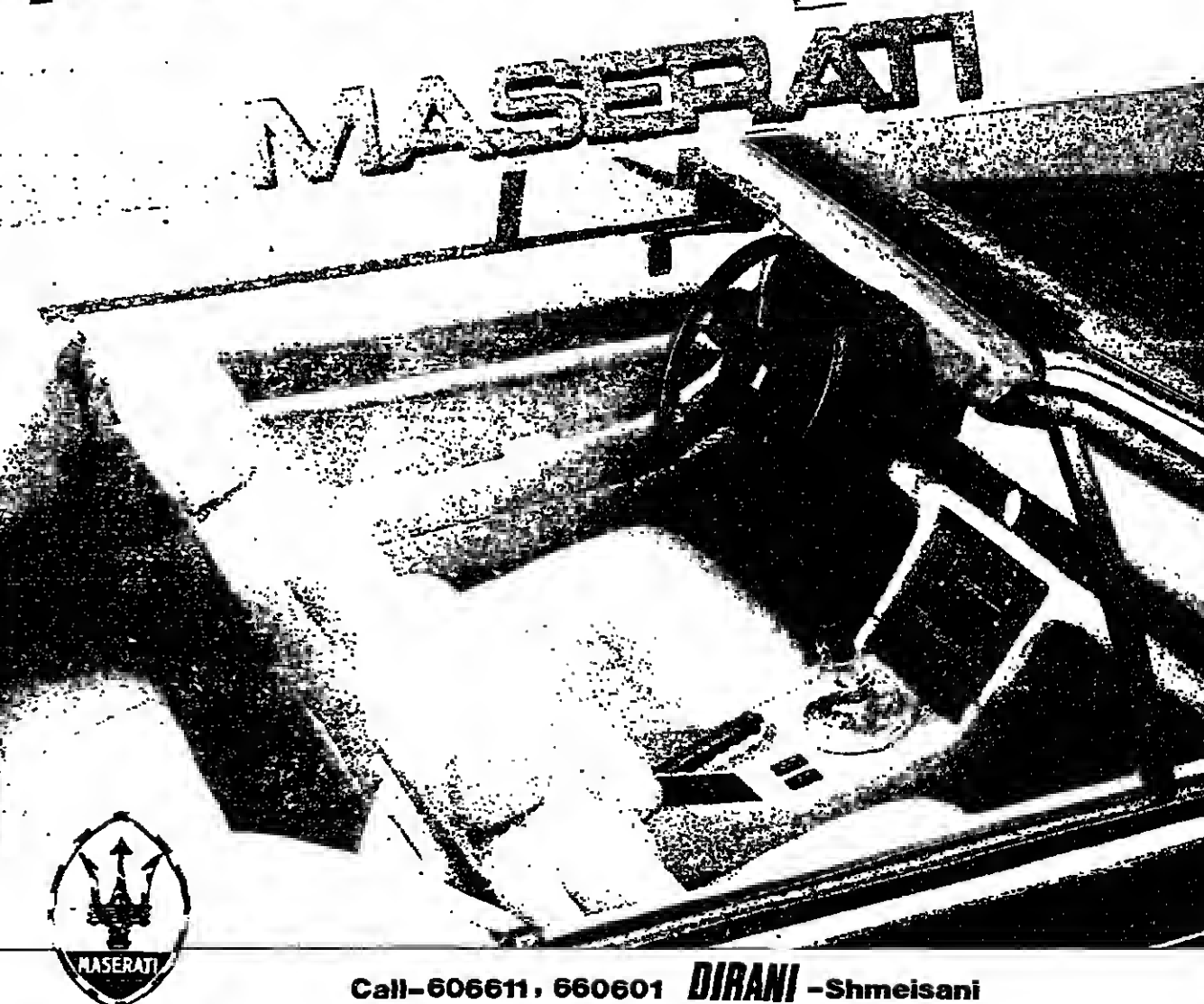
A "defector" Iraqi nuclear scientist began giving details then of what he said were Iraqi efforts to conceal its undamaged nuclear stockpile, the newspaper said.

The "defector" was said to have described the elaborate shifting of nuclear materials, such as enriched uranium, so they would elude notice by U.N. inspectors.

Defence Department officials were quoted as saying the United States had two aircraft carriers, Nimitz and Forrestal, carrying more than 100 aircraft, within striking range of Iraq.

U.S. troops in the region have dwindled to 65,000 roughly 12 per cent of their peak presence during the recent war.

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Ivanisevic forces into 2nd round

LONDON (R) — Yugoslav Goran Ivanisevic pushed his country's current internal strife to the back of his mind Friday as he surged impressively into the second round at watery Wimbledon.

Ivanisevic, who has been receiving the latest news of the troubles in Slovenia from his sister in Split, beat Britain's Andrew Castle 7-6 7-6 6-2, setting a personal record of aces in the process.

The 10th seed blasted 25 first serves past the resigned Castle, eclipsing his performance against Boris Becker in last year's French Open fourth round, and pronounced himself a good bet to improve on his semifinal appearance at Wimbledon 12 months ago.

"I'm not here to think about politics, I'm here to play my best tennis," said Ivanisevic, reassured by his 25-year-old sister Srdjana that the situation in Split at least — far away from the conflict in the north — was calm.

"It's okay. Everything is quiet. Apparently it's hot and nice and they're swimming every day."

For the fifth successive day, it was anything but hot and nice at Wimbledon. Just 95 minutes play was possible before more rain arrived, briefly interrupting two intriguing matches involving Americans Andre Agassi and Jimmy Connors.

Agassi was 6-5 down to Canadian Grant Connell in the third set of their match on centre court with only 29 minutes play possible in their delayed first round encounter.

Fifth seed Agassi, still dressed in pure white, dropped the set in a tie-break after the resumption.

Connors was looking in good order against Finland's Veli Paloheimo and was leading 6-2 4-0 when play was halted for 25 minutes. He quickly wrapped up the second set 6-0 after the break.

Court one had dried out appreciably from the previous evening, to the delight of the



Goran Ivanisevic

previous incumbent Ivanisevic, 7-6 5-5 ahead overnight, who had complained to the assistant referee about conditions.

"I told the supervisor it was dangerous but he did not agree. For them it was okay, for me it was not okay."

Jordan Open Golf championship results

By Munem Fakhouri
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Some 40 competitors including visitors from Syria and the Gulf region took part in the Jordan Open Golf Championships held Friday at the Bisharat Golf course under the patronage of HRH Prince Faisal Ben Al Hussein.

The men competition was won by Tariq Afrid, who is Pakistan's ambassador to Jordan, with a score of 72. (This was a new course record). Last year's title holder Mr. Shishir Dutta came second followed by Mr. Oh Jong Kim.

The ladies competition was won by Mrs. Jenny Murphy. The handicap competition was won by Mr. T. Meguro with Roy Law as runner up and Tim Charsley third.

Special prizes were awarded to beginners with first going to Tony Gardiner, second to Awni Nasser and third to Bob Bowker, who is Australia's ambassador in Amman.

The men's trophy was presented by HRH Prince Ra'ad ben Zeid and the ladies trophy was presented by HRH Princess Muna.

The event was sponsored by Hotel Jordan Intercontinental.

French, Epsom Derby winners scare opposition in Ireland

DUBLIN (R) — Europe's big two, Generous and Suave Dancer, have frightened off the opposition in Sunday's Irish Derby by horse racing classic.

Only six face the Curragh starter — the smallest field since 1937 — and that includes a 500-1 Pace-maker and 1,000-1 complete outsider.

But it remains a high-quality affair, which has the added spice of Lester Piggott riding unbeaten Irish defender Sportsweek for his old friend and mentor Vincent O'Brien.

At the other end of the scale part-time trainer Luke Comer has entered the 1,000-1 chance Barry's Run.

The colt has been beaten in all his 19 races to date, but one hopeful punter in London Wednesday laid out £1,000 (\$1,620) to win £1 million (\$1.62 million).

English Derby winner Generous looks like starting an even money favourite, narrowly preferred to French counterpart Suave Dancer at around 6-4.

Both colts have impressive credentials. Generous, ridden by Alan Munro, was a sparkling five lengths winner at Epsom, while Suave Dancer, with Cash Asmusen on board, swept home by four lengths at Chantilly.

If the pair reproduce their form it could be a classic to savour. Generous finished only fourth in the English 2,000 guineas race over a mile (1.6 km) at Newmarket.

But over the 12 furlongs (2.1 km) at Epsom he proved twice the performer, going clear of Marju with third-placed Star Of Gdansk another seven lengths away.

Marju underlined the value of the form when winning at Royal Ascot last week and Generous has a bright chance.

The colt will not travel until the

morning of the race, trainer Paul Cole recalling a disappointing performance in France last year when Generous stayed overnight in Deauville.

Cole reports his star "as a fit as a flea" and ambitious Munro in the saddle will be keen to add to his laurels.

The 24-year-old Englishman rides in a crouched American style, similar to that of Asmusen, his chief rival Sunday.

The French-based American has recovered from a broken collar bone and on the form book Suave Dancer has every chance of emulating previous French and Irish Derby double scorers, Ardent in 1982 and Old Vic in 1989.

The ground for the 12 furlong test is likely to be on the soft side after a recent downpour and Suave Dancer has proved he can handle a yielding surface.

Generous ran badly the only time he met Real Give in the terrain but that was at Deauville when seemingly homesick.

Sportsweek, quoted at 11-2, would be a sentimental winner for the old firm of Piggott and O'Brien who go back together to the days of the Minstrel, Nijinsky and Sir Ivor.

The colt has won all his three races to date but Sunday represents a far sterner task.

Star Of Gdansk (10-1) ran on well at Epsom but it is hard to see him and jockey Christy Roche making up the 12 lengths which separated them and Generous in the English Derby, despite the presence of their own pacemaker, 500-1 shot Nordic Admirer.

Whatever the fate of Barry's run — said, incidentally, to have sparked in a gallop at home Monday — Comer will not leave the Curragh empty-handed.

Prize money goes to the first six home with the last placed picking up about \$15,000.

Sainz stretches lead over Finn in N. Zealand Rally

ROTORUA, New Zealand (R) — Spain's Carlos Sainz gradually pulled away from second placed Juha Kankkunen of Finland during a long, hard second day in the World Championship New Zealand Rally Friday.

The Toyota driver stretched his lead over Kankkunen, his closest rival in the World Championship, to 40 seconds on a driving day lasting more than 15 hours.

"We were going flat out," Sainz said after setting fastest time in five of the day's 12 special stages. "I really could not have gone much faster."

But the quickest man for much of the day was France's Didier Auriol, a team mate of Kankkunen at Lancia.

He started the day in third, one minute 27 seconds behind Sainz after a spin and two mechanical problems Thursday.

Auriol recorded fastest times in six of the stages and at one point

had trimmed nine seconds off Sainz's advantage.

But on the final stage the car suffered a broken front differential and Auriol lost 26 seconds to finish the day worse off than he had begun it, although still in third place.

Markku Alen of Finland held fourth all day, a brush with a bank earning his Subaru scars to match those on Sainz's and Auriol's cars.

Friday's weather was mainly fine and the gravel roads — some of them very tight and slow — were in better condition than the muddy route on the rainy Thursday.

Ross Meekings of New Zealand took over the lead in the Group N production car class with his Toyota.

The rally, seventh round of the World Drivers' Championship but not part of the manufacturers' series, finishes Sunday.

Johnson is no sure bet for Canada's Tokyo team

TORONTO (R) — Ben Johnson is hoping to regain some lost glory at August's World Athletics Championships but he may run out of time in his bid to qualify for the competition.

Johnson has yet to secure a spot in Canada's team for the Tokyo event and needs to post a time of 10.30 seconds or better in 100 metres competition to clinch a berth.

The 29-year-old Johnson will have his next shot at qualifying Monday when he is slated to race arch-rival Carl Lewis in Lille, France.

It will be their first encounter since the 1988 Olympics when Johnson failed a drug test and forfeited his 100-metre gold medal and world record time of 9.79 seconds.

The long-awaited showdown is looming as a mismatch. Lewis clocked the third fastest 100-metre time — 9.93 seconds — two weeks ago at the U.S. Championships.

Johnson, who returned to competition in January after serving a two-year drug suspension, has fared poorly in his four 100-metre outings with times of 10.69 and 10.54 in May, and 10.41 and 10.40 in June.

If Johnson fails to beat the 10.30 mark beforehand, his final opportunity to match the standard will come at the Canadian Nationals from July 25-28.

Johnson is currently ranked fourth in Canada with times equal to those he ran as a 19-year-old in 1981 before he began using steroids.

Cecil Smith, executive director of the Ontario Athletics Association, feels Johnson is no certainty to qualify.

"His times are improving. But the big question is whether Ben has enough time to run 10.30 by the Canadian Nationals," Smith said.

"I think he's going to run out of time."

Canada can send three 100-metre runners to Tokyo, but Smith said Canadian sprinters Bruny Surin and Atlee Mahorn have virtually assured themselves berths.

"There's really only one spot left," he said. "Right now it's Ben's to lose."

Ironically, Brian Morrison has done Johnson a favour by removing himself from contention after receiving a two-year ban earlier this month when he failed a random drug test. Morrison tested positive for Stanozolol, the same steroid which proved Johnson's undoing.

But two other Canadians — Glenroy Gilbert and Brad McCuaig — are expected to mount strong challenges to Johnson for a world team berth.

Various theories on Johnson's slow times are being heard. Some say Johnson is simply posting times that more accurately reflect his drug-free ability.

And, they note, that Johnson turns 30 in December. Others cite the fact Johnson had no coach during his two-year suspension. Since he has been back he has had two different coaches.

Johnson's past success as a sprinter — aided by eight years of steroid use — and current struggles appear to offer strong proof that steroids do indeed work.

Dr. Andrew Pipe, chairman of the newly-formed Canadian Anti-Doping Organisation, agreed the cessation of steroid use unquestionably results in diminished performance.

"There is good evidence in the (medical) literature that one becomes dependent on anabolic steroids so there are differences encountered when an athlete stops using them," Pipe said.

Brazil, Argentina draw in stormy soccer friendly

CURITIBA, Brazil (R) — Argentina's World Cup goal-keeper Sergio Goycochea kept his side alive in Thursday's soccer friendly as they drew 1-1 with Brazil in a typically stormy clash of the South American giants.

Goycochea, whose performance in last year's World Cup made him a national hero, kept the Brazil attack at bay with a series of dramatic saves in their tune-up for next month's South American Championship.

Brazil needed a controversial penalty awarded against Argentine defender Carlos Enrique to salvage the draw after Argentina grabbed a 1-0 lead in the 50th minute with a breakaway goal by Claudio Caniggia.

Enrique was sent off for dissent as he and his furious team-mates surrounded Brazilian referee Wilson Carlos Dos Santos, claiming that a handball had been accidental.

Brazil's captain Neto converted in the 57th minute to avoid a repeat of their 1-0 loss to Argentina in last year's World Cup.

Brazil dominated the first half but were repeatedly foiled by Goycochea.

In the seventh minute, he tipped a Neto free kick over his crossbar and five minutes later he saved a point-blank shot from Careca II after the Argentine defence failed to clear a corner.

Goycochea frustrated Neto again late in the first half when he pushed a free kick onto the cross-

bar and just before half-time he blocked a shot from Valdir, who had been left clear following a quick exchange of passes with Joao Paulo.

Argentina did not manage a single shot in the first half.

They finally got on the scoreboard when Caniggia, scorer of the winning goal in last year's World Cup clash between the two countries, picked up a loose ball on the edge of the Brazil penalty area and beat two defenders with a shot into the far corner of the goal.

Although billed as a friendly, the match was anything but as the traditionally heated Brazil-Argentina rivalry boiled over several times.

Renato of Brazil and Argentine captain Oscar Ruggeri were involved in an off-the-ball incident in the first half.

Temper flared again the 57th minute when Brazil were awarded the penalty that led to the equaliser when a clearance by Argentine defender Sergio Vazquez struck Enrique's hand in the penalty area.

In the 65th minute, Branco of Brazil and Gabriel Batistuta of Argentina clashed in another off-the-ball incident and one minute later Branco was booked for a violent challenge on the same player.

Neto was also booked for a violent challenge on Fabian Basualdo just before the end.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY JUNE 29, 1991

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Richter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Startling and unexpected developments are apt to be taking place today so it would be better if you have made no definite commitments and just go with the flow all the dust settles.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You are fascinated by some matters or persons from a distance or by some changes that are starting to come in being to let them proceed fully.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Avoid trying to get out from under some obligation or you can lose the good will of one who has otherwise your interest at heart for your success.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) A day to make sure you do not try to put a fast one over on some associate but control this almost irresistible urge to do what you've promised.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You have lots of odds and ends to do that you couldn't care less about doing but this is the best way to utilize this day wisely.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You have the urge to run away from what you've agreed to do to play at some venture that could do you no good whatever so first finish jobs started.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) This is your day to carefully

sidestep that argumentative subject at home and put your time and energies getting family to know you value them.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Now you are able to find the sure spot in usual work that requires much time and attention on your part to heal and make right with daily exact.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) A day to be sure you do not spend more than you can afford on some temporary pleasure that actually does you no good in any way at all.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You have a sort of discontent now that causes you to blurt out with some contentious comments that could well put you behind the eight ball.

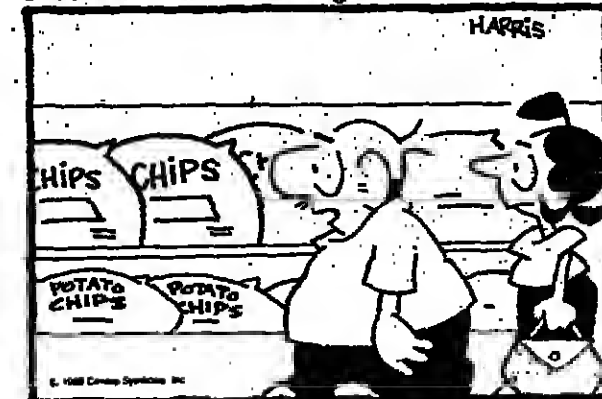
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You are all stirred up to try to get out of some restriction but you go into it yourself so don't try to shove it off on someone else.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Now you find you have all kinds of desires to see and be with friends and to try to get them to see some personal pressure as you do but they are naturally indifferent.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You want to go straight to one in power in some way and tell him you would be seeking your neck out where it would put you in adverse light.

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



"What kind of potato chips do we want? Regular, lite, decaffeinated or unleaded?"

JUMBLE.

by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

MYKUR

FINEK

GRAVEA

PINGYT

Answer here: I'M NOT

Yesterday's Jumbles: PARTY, GUISE, FLABBY, DAWNED

Answer: Money talks without giving — ITSELF AWAY

(Answers tomorrow)

THE BACHELOR CLAIMED HE HAD LOTS OF CHANCES TO GET MARRIED BUT KEPT SAYING---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: I'M NOT

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Financial Markets
in co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	1991	1990
Sterling Pound	1.9882	1.9882
Deutsche Mark	1.7572	1.7572
Swiss Franc	1.5474	1.5474
French Franc	6.5596	6.5596
Japanese Yen	158.42	158.42
European Currency Unit	1.4865	1.4865

European Currency Unit

Currency	1991	1990
U.S. Dollar	0.67	0.67
Sterling Pound	0.48	0.48
Deutsche Mark	0.55	0.55
Swiss Franc	0.75	0.75
French Franc	3.40	3.40
Japanese Yen	107.00	107.00
European Currency Unit	1.00	1.00

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.86	0.86
Sterling Pound	1.1297	1.1297
Deutsche Mark	0.8631	0.8631
Swiss Franc	0.4423	0.4423
French Franc	0.1126	0.1126
Japanese Yen	0.4954	0.4954
Dutch Guilder	0.3349	0.3349
Swedish Krona	0.1058	0.1058
Italian Lira	0.0514	0.0514
Belgian Franc	0.01865	0.01865

Other Currencies

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7900	1.8200
Lebanese Lira	0.0750	0.0780
Saudi Riyal	1.824	1.834
Kuwaiti Dinar	-	-
Qatari Riyal	1.852	1.862
Egyptian Pound	1.900	2.100
Omani Rial	1.7500	1.7700
UAE Dirham	1.852	1.862
Greek Drachma	0.3560	0.3660
Cypriot Pound	1.3900	1.4200

CAB Indices for Amman Financial Market

Index	19/6/1991	26/6/1991
All-Share	112.65	112.95
Banking Sector	108.12	108.03
Insurance Sector	116.31	117.22
Industry Sector	116.90	117.76
Services Sector	130.96	131.36

Japan scandals crack barriers for foreign securities houses

TOKYO (R) — Foreign securities houses in Tokyo see big opportunities arising from the current scandals embroiling their big four Japanese competitors.

The exposure of corrupt market practices and the purge of powerful personnel could give a boost to financial deregulation and remove obstacles to market access, foreign securities house officials say.

"There's no high moral ground left for Japanese brokers," said Mr. Paul Summerville, senior economist at Jardine Fleming Securities Ltd.

"It makes foreign brokers look a lot more attractive, it's good for the industry," he added.

"I don't think we're going to have to push," said a senior official at one major non-Japanese securities house.

Straight bonds and other forms of corporate finance, fund management and derivatives are the likely areas for fresh confrontations between foreign and Japanese brokers, and the foreigners feel their hands have been strengthened.

Japanese investors may be increasingly attracted to the sophisticated investment techniques and research foreign firms offer, if they come to rely less on the

marketing muscle and tacit guarantees of the big four Japanese firms.

"If people can no longer look forward to guaranteed returns, they will be looking for more sophisticated hedging techniques, and arbitrage," said Mr. Kenneth Connors, strategist at D.B. Capital Markets Asia Ltd. "Those are areas where foreign firms have invested a great deal, and are more competitive."

A common view in Tokyo is that the brokerage scandal represents a victory by a pro-deregulation faction within the ministry of finance (MOF) over regulators and powerful industry interests that favoured the status quo.

"There was a need to clean house," the foreign official said. MOF regulators and the securities industry they oversaw had grown too close.

"I've always thought this was the biggest impediment to the marketplace," he said.

Japan's efforts to deregulate its financial system have bogged down in the conflicting interests of the country's bankers and brokers.

While many MOF officials agree on the need for change, the ministry's banking and securities

bureaus often act more as advocates than investors of their respective industries. Proposals to reshape the industry have degenerated into political compromises that satisfy no one.

Corporate finance, including corporate bonds, is one battlefield in the conflict between banks and brokers, and the regulatory standoff has brought domestic insurance to a virtual halt, forcing borrowers offshore to the Euro-market.

Everybody involved says a smoothly functioning domestic bond market is desirable, but neither banks nor brokers want to give up lucrative privileges they enjoy under the current system.

Foreign brokers want desperately to break into the market, and now they sense an opening.

The U.S. government has been a vocal advocate of reform in Japanese financial markets. Japanese brokers' practice of compensating clients for losses has been an item of discussion in past bilateral talks.

The Japanese brokerage scandals involving ties to gangsters and loss-covering for favoured clients have raised doubts Japan's financial markets will ever reform.

Pessimists say dubious deals and shady links in the underworld are part of business here.

"Scandal is an inherent characteristic of the Japanese financial system," said Mr. Robert Zielinski, financial analyst at Jardine Fleming Securities Ltd. "It's part of Japan."

On Monday the securities industry was shaken by the resignation of presidents of two of Japan's leading brokerages, Nomura Securities Co. Ltd. and Nikko Securities Co. Ltd.

The resignations followed news that the brokerages had covered investment losses by favoured corporate clients and introduced affiliate firms to officials of a golf club later found to be run by the head of Japan's second largest "Yakuza" crime syndicate.

Nikko also acknowledged another affiliate had lent funds to the same crime syndicate, and a finance ministry official said Tuesday a Nomura finance affiliate had done the same.

The other two of Japan's big four brokerages, Daiwa Securities Co. Ltd. and Yamaichi Securities Co. Ltd., also admitted Monday they had compensated clients for losses last year, just as they had for losses in the 1987 world stock market crash.

The finance ministry said Tuesday it would crack down on such practices. Police vowed to investigate the Yakuza links.

But sceptics said the scandals are the underside of a social and economic structure that values long-term business ties and social stability.

Market experts say compensating favoured clients for losses is common in the securities business. Critics said the finance ministry turned a blind eye to the practice.

"The economic system is based on mutual support and protection. Banks help out troubled

Iraq lifts restrictions on cash withdrawals

BAGHDAD (AP) — The finance ministry has lifted the restriction on withdrawal of cash from Iraqi banks first imposed at the beginning of the Gulf war more than five months ago, the party newspaper Al Thawra reported Friday.

Iraqis, who had been limited to withdrawals of just 400 dinars per month, or \$1,280 at the official rate of exchange, will now be able to move any amount of money from their checking and savings accounts, Finance Minister Majid Abed Jaafar said.

The dinar is sold for \$3.2 at the official rate, but its value on the black market six dinars to the U.S. dollar, Mr. Jaafar said that the lifting of the ban came "after the hanks returned to their normal activities and in order to utilise national savings in investment and efforts to reconstruct the country's economy."

The move was seen as an attempt to curb high inflation rates of 250 per cent or more since the Gulf war by restoring public faith in newly minted dinars and in the banking system.

The government imposed the ban immediately after the U.S.-led allied forces began their air campaign against Iraq on Jan. 17 to force it to withdraw from Kuwait.

The government feared a run on private accounts that might lead to a collapse of the banking system.

Rising Caspian Sea threatens Iranian exports of caviar

NICOSIA (R) — The alarming rise of the Caspian Sea is threatening half of Iran's caviar exports, Tehran radio has said.

The sea, which has already flooded hundreds of hectares of paddy fields on its southwestern coast, is threatening the Ashuradeh peninsula in the southeast where more than half of Iran's caviar is processed.

The radio said "160 houses and part of the fishery facilities have been flooded and if the rise continues, the whole peninsula will be inundated."

President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani visited the Caspian coast last week to review measures taken to deal with the rise of the sea in recent months.

The Caspian, the world's largest inland body of water, is enclosed by Iran and the Soviet Union. Most of its 1,200-kilometre length lies in the Soviet Union.

The Iranian news agency IRNA said two weeks ago that the sea had risen 40 centimetres in two months, probably a result of greater inflow from the Volga and other Soviet rivers.

Rising Caspian waters have flooded hundreds of homes near the town of Cheleken on its eastern coast in Soviet Turkmenia and its southwestern coast in Iran, according to Soviet and Iranian press reports this month.

U.S. opposes further dollar appreciation

WASHINGTON (R) — A further rise in the value of the dollar, up substantially since the beginning of the year, could potentially hurt U.S. competitiveness in world markets, a senior treasury official has said.

Undersecretary David Mulford, in testimony before a Senate banking subcommittee, however, made it clear the United States was not worried that its exports would be undercut at present dollar levels.

"We indicated that the Group of Seven meeting that we did not have a concern about the present level of the dollar, but obviously, we are not anxious to see the dollar continuing to appreciate, because at some point, it will impact our competitiveness," Mr. Mulford said.

United States policymakers have been watching the dollar closely since it was to get too strong, U.S. exports overseas would be too expensive.

British boardroom fat cats slammed for soaraway wages

LONDON (R) — British politicians have slammed senior business executives for accepting huge pay rises.

"It's a fat cat's greed race," opposition Labour Party member George Foulkes told the House of Commons.

Businessmen were flayed for taking double-figure pay rises while the Conservative government calls for wage restraint and 2.2 million people are jobless.

Many of the well-rewarded executives head formerly state-owned businesses privatised under former prime minister, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher.

Their rises, some topping 60 per cent, have become a source of embarrassment to her successor, Mr. John Major.

Mr. Major has called some of the rises unjustified and asked for restraint, but every day brings a new storm over salaries.

On Thursday the chief of electricity supplier Powergen was reported to have almost trebled his

salary and benefits over two years to £200,000 (almost \$400,000).

The day before, another privatised power company, National Power, awarded its chief a 58 per cent pay rise.

There was controversy earlier this year when Bank of England Governor Robin Leigh-Pemberton won a 17 per cent rise. But that soon paled into insignificance compared with a 66 per cent boost for the chairman of British Gas, which took his annual salary to £370,000 (£604,000).

British Telecommunications Chairman Ian Vallance donated £150,000 (\$244,000) to charity after a public storm over his 43 per cent rise.

Labour parliamentarians, whose salaries start at about £29,000, exploited Mr. Major's discomfort Thursday by asking if this was the classless society he has said he wants to promote.

Labour member Elliot Morley asked: "Is Majorism simply extortion by the few and exploitation of the many?"

Conservative politician, Sir John Stokes, who has worked for British multinationals including Imperial Chemical Industries, struck back at Labour, asking: "Am I alone in getting tired of the politics of envy?"

Mr. Major himself earns just over £66,000 (about \$110,000 a year).

He replied to Thursday's critics by saying that while huge pay rises were regrettable the government would not interfere with the commercial decisions of formerly state-run monopolies.

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One Sterling	1.6200/10	U.S. dollar
One U.S. dollar	1.1415/20	Canadian dollar
	1.8140/50	Deutsche marks
	2.0400/10	Dutch guilders
	1.5603/10	Swiss francs
	37.33/37	Belgian francs
	6.1400/50	French francs
	1350/1351	Italian lire
	138.10/11	Japanese yen
	6.5510/60	Swedish crowns
	7.0750/0800	Norwegian crowns
	7.0100/50	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	367.00/367.50	U.S. dollars

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

TOKYO — News reports that Finance Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto said the ministry may review whether public entities should invest in equities hurt already bearish sentiment. The Nikkei average ended down 252.07 at 23,290.96.

SYDNEY — The All Ordinaries index ended up 5.4 at 1,506.2 on the last trading day of the financial year, escaping profit downgrades by two major mining houses just after the close of trade.

SINGAPORE — Share prices closed broadly lower as selling pressure continued on bearish sentiment, weighed down by the drop in Tokyo. The Straits times industrial index lost 4.23 points to close at 1,489.89.

BOMBAY — Share prices fell on nervous speculative selling ahead of the weekend and the budget. The Bombay Stock Exchange index fell 20.03 points to 1,269.91.

FRANKFURT — Shares plunged 2.6 per cent to a five-week low on fears a German court ruling would lead to tighter control on taxation of investment earnings. The Dax index fell 43.91 to 1,622.18, the lowest close since May 21.

ZURICH — Prices finished easier but above lows in moderate trading as the market followed sharp losses on the German Bourses. The SPI index fell 3.5 to 1,091.4.

PARIS — A sharp fall in Frankfurt combined with a nervous domestic climate pushed the CAC-40 to a three-month closing low of 1,747.62, down 20.37.

LONDON — The FTSE index ended down 37.7 at 2,414.8, a four-month closing low, on increased speculation of a rise in German interest rates and tracking a weaker New York and FTSE futures.

NEW YORK — Blue chips dropped over 1.7 per cent then recovered mildly in afternoon trading. Some end-of-quarter switching from stocks to bonds and worries about Iraq and U.S. banks prompted the fall. The Dow was down 47 at 2,887.

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Communist revolt against Gorbachev sweeps Siberia

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Hard-line Communist chiefs in major Siberian cities and regions were reported Friday to have launched a drive clearly aimed at forcing Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev to resign as head of the party.

The radical newspaper Nezavisimaya Gazeta and the official TASS news agency quoted statements from once all-powerful organisations denouncing what they called "a slide to capitalism" under the current party leadership.

"The actions of the political and state leadership of our country have in recent times taken on an even more and-people character," said a joint declaration by 11 party first secretaries cited by Nezavisimaya Gazeta.

And TASS said the Communist organisations of the major industrial centre of Novosibirsk had called for an emergency congress of the Soviet Communist Party to discuss the situation created by the "inconsistency" of its top leaders.

"The course of a radical renewal of socialism has been replaced with an increasing slide into capitalism," said the Novosibirsk statement, which also criticised chiefs of the conservative-dominated Russian Communist Party for "weakness."

"Destructive processes are mouning in the country and total chaos in the economy and the collapse of statehood cannot be ruled out," declared the statement, issued after a joint meeting of the Novosibirsk city and regional party bodies.

The joint declaration reported by Nezavisimaya Gazeta was signed by the first secretaries of the Buryat and Tuva republics, of the Altai and Krasnoyarsk regions, and of Irkutsk, Kemerovo, Omsk, Tomsk, Novosibirsk, Tyumen and Chita.

These represent party organisations across vast tracts of western and central Siberia where party organisations for decades held total sway over exploitation of huge natural resources ranging from oil to timber.

In their declaration, among the

toughest yet seen from an organised group of top-level opponents of Gorbachev's reforms, the Siberian Communist chiefs said there had been a sharp swing away from officially-approved party policy by Moscow.

"The leadership of the party and the country is being carried out by a narrow group of people who are ignoring the constitution and the laws of the USSR," said the declaration, the full text of which has not been published in Moscow.

"Much of what is happening today has nothing in common with the perestroika that was supported by the party and the people in 1985," the first secretaries said. Gorbachev was appointed party general secretary in March 1985.

The charges against the Kremlin chief and his current team, viewed by many liberals and radicals as dominated by moderate conservatives, echoed recent complaints by former party number two Yegor Ligachev that perestroika had gone off the rails.

But the Novosibirsk accusations against chiefs of the Russian party, headed by hardliner Ivan Polozkov, suggested there was little unity among conservative Communists and that many wanted a tougher stand against Gorbachev.

Gorbachev, whom many radicals believed had firmly aligned himself with the conservatives late last year, offered to resign as party chief at a plenary session of the Soviet party's policy-making Central Committee in April.

His move followed bitter criticism of his stewardship of the organisation from individual speakers, several of whom also charged that his backing for a market economy meant a return to capitalism. But his offer was not taken up.

Probe of 'black berets'

In a separate development, Gorbachev Thursday ordered his interior minister to investigate an attack by Soviet "black beret" troops on Lithuania's central telephone building, his spokesman said.

About 45 members of the Omon Force stormed the building in the secessionist republic Wednesday afternoon, evicted its employees and cut off telephone and telegraph service across Lithuania for about two hours.

A black beret commander told Lithuanian officials his men were sent to confiscate illegal weapons believed stored by pro-independence activists. He said he was acting under orders of Soviet Interior Minister Boris Pugo and the Kremlin-appointed prosecutor in the republic.

The troops claimed to find weapons in the building, then left without incident. There were no injuries.

"The president was immediately informed about the events. He ... urgently instructed (Pugo) to investigate the matter," spokesman Vitaly Ignatenko told the news agency Interfax.

Pugo, a former Latvian KGB chief considered a hardliner, denied to Lithuanian officials Wednesday that he ordered the attack, a Lithuanian representative in Moscow said.

Interior Ministry spokesman Andrei Chernenko confirmed at a briefing Thursday that Pugo did not know about the raid in advance.

"If he had to order every case of arms confiscation, he would have drowned in a sea of information. This would have impaired the promptness and effectiveness of militia actions," Chernenko told reporters, according to the Soviet news agency TASS.

Lithuanian officials branded the raid a "rehearsal" for overthrow of the Lithuanian government, which declared independence last year.

Western diplomats said the raid likely would hurt Gorbachev's case in London when he presents his reform achievements to leaders of seven leading industrialised nations July 15-17.

"One can get the impression that someone is taking these provocative steps to spoil the atmosphere on the eve of the president's talks in London," Ignatenko said, according to Interfax.



Lech Walesa

Parliament defeats Walesa on election law

WARSAW (R) — Poland's Communist-dominated parliament overwhelmingly rejected President Lech Walesa's veto of a controversial election law drafted by the assembly.

The Sejm (lower house) mustered 21 votes more than the required two-thirds majority as 282 deputies voted Friday to reject the veto. One hundred were against and nine abstained.

The vote means that Walesa, who wanted to stop the election regulations he considers as a recipe for a fragmented and weak parliament, is now obliged to sign the bill into law.

Walesa has until July 3 to announce Poland's first free parliamentary elections since World War II. The only possible date for the poll, according to the constitution and statutory campaigning period, is Oct. 27.

Walesa first vetoed parliament's draft election law on June 10. The Sejm then failed by seven votes to override his veto and passed a simplified draft which included most of his demands.

Walesa was unhappy that the revised draft meant voters would choose individual candidates on party lists. He said this was likely to create a parliament of 460 individuals rather than strong parties.

Walesa has called the Sejm an "imposed and illegitimate" chamber. Sixty-five per cent of its members are ex-Communists and their former allies holding reserved seats under an outdated 1989 deal with the Solidarity movement.

Most holders of reserved seats and some former Walesa aides, who have formed the Democratic Union Party, voted to overrule the veto, dealing him a humiliating blow.

Walesa has held four rallies since Sunday as he turned to grassroots support to exert more pressure on the Sejm.

"If it appears that we can accept any blackmail it will be a bad omen for the Polish democracy," a Democratic Union leader, Jack Kuron, said before the vote.

Walesa warned that he would dissolve parliament if it stuck to its draft but then backed down, saying he would not break the constitution.

Thatcher to step down from parliament

LONDON (R) — Former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher will step down as a member of parliament, Britain's national Press Association news agency said, quoting the Conservative Party central office.

"After the deepest consideration I have decided not to stand again at the next election," Thatcher said in a statement.

Thatcher, 65, resigned as prime minister last Nov. 28 after a backbench rebellion in the ruling Conservative Party against her autocratic style.

The "iron lady" was Britain's first woman prime minister. Her 11½ years in office were the longest premiership of the century.

Her successor was John Major. Some Conservatives have been urging her not to stay on the House of Commons backbenches for fear that she might make his task more difficult.

"It is my purpose to continue to be a strong ally and friend of Prime Minister Major and the government he leads," Thatcher added.

Last Wednesday, Thatcher made a powerful speech in parliament reiterating her hostility to the idea of a federal European Community and a single EC currency, warning Major not to abdicate British sovereignty.



Margaret Thatcher

Cambodian rivals agree to Peking talks

BANGKOK (R) — Rival Cambodian leaders have agreed to meet in Peking next month to try to iron out differences over a United Nations peace plan, diplomatic and guerrilla sources said Friday.

It would be the first time the rival factions have met in China, which has been the main backer of the Cambodian guerrillas in their 12-year war against the Vietnamese-installed government in Phnom Penh.

The informal mid-July meeting would be preparation for a full formal session of Cambodia's Supreme National Council (SNC) in Bangkok in late August, said the guerrilla source, a member of the faction loyal to former monarch Prince Norodom Sihanouk.

Among those attending would be Hun Sen, premier of the Phnom Penh government, he said.

Phnom Penh officials could not immediately be reached for comment, but a Western diplomat in Bangkok confirmed the agreement.

He said the meeting was arranged to sustain momentum after the guerrillas and the government made significant progress in narrowing their differences during talks this week at

the Thai beach resort of Pattaya. Among the points agreed were a ceasefire and moratorium on arms shipments to Cambodia.

The diplomat said the choice of Peking was significant in that it showed the cordial atmosphere that had developed in Pattaya.

The meeting would not involve all 12 SNC members, but it would be attended by representatives of the United Nations, France and Indonesia, the guerrilla source said.

France and Indonesia co-chair the Paris International Conference on Cambodia.

Important differences have still to be resolved over the U.N. peace plan, which calls for foreign administrators virtually to run Cambodia during a disarmament period ahead of elections.

While the guerrillas have accepted the plan in full, Phnom Penh wants amendments to prevent a return to power of the Khmer Rouge whose rule from 1975 to 1979 caused the deaths of more than a million Cambodians.

The Khmer Rouge is the most powerful of the three guerrilla factions and has received the strongest backing from China. Diplomats attribute the unusual flexibility the Khmer Rouge showed in Pattaya to pressure from its ally.

The United Nations has said it cannot send a major force to monitor the ceasefire until the U.N. plan is accepted.

Diplomats said proper monitoring would require thousands of personnel and the United Nations was unwilling to commit money to sustain that kind of force without a definite political settlement.

Sihanouk said he would preside over the SNC, a "super-government" of the factions, when it sets up headquarters in Phnom Penh in November.

On Thursday the former monarch urged the factions to respect the ceasefire and asked foreign countries which have been providing military aid to stop doing so immediately.

In a statement issued "in my capacity as former king of Cambodia" Sihanouk also urged countries to stop allowing their territory to be used to transport military aid to the factions.

The guerrillas have received Chinese arms through Thailand for the past decade. China says it stopped sending weapons when the U.N. plan was announced last year.

Thailand's foreign minister, Arsa Sarasin, Thursday repeated Thai denials that it was a transit route for weapons to the guerrillas.

Burma rebels kill 38 troops in ambush

MAE SOT, Thailand (R) — Burmese rebels killed 38 soldiers in an ambush in eastern Karen state in their biggest attack for months, Thai army and guerrilla officers said Friday.

More than 300 guerrillas of the Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB) attacked about 700 soldiers near the town of Kaw Kareik before dawn on June 22, a Burmese student fighter fresh from the front told Reuters.

They killed 38 troops and

wounded 68. Four ethnic Karen fighters were killed and six wounded, a guerrilla officer said.

Kaw Kareik is some 50 kilometres west of the Burmese town of Myawadi, which is opposite the Thai border town of Mae Sot.

The rebels took army mortars and recoilless rifles before withdrawing after a day of fierce exchanges, the guerrilla officer said.

A Thai army officer in Mae

Sot, who like the other sources asked not to be named, confirmed the Burmese government casualties.

He said the Burmese troops were on their way to attack the Karen base of Komura, close to the Thai border.

The DAB was formed in 1988 and unites ethnic rebel groups with young Burmese dissidents who fled a brutal military suppression of an uprising for democracy that year.

South Korean student activists attack U.S. Cultural Centre

SEOUL (R) — Police fired warning shots and tear gas to disperse hundreds of South Korean students who were attacking a U.S. Cultural Centre with firebombs Friday, the eve of an American tour by President Roh Tae-woo, reports said.

Witnesses in the southwestern city of Kwangju said the students, who numbered about 400, also attacked a police substation.

They said a small band of students entered the building housing the cultural centre and

staged a brief protest on a balcony, shouting "Yankee go home" and demanding Roh cancel a trip to the United States and Canada scheduled to begin Saturday.

A police spokesman said five of the student activists were arrested at the scene. He said nearly 30 police officers were injured. The witnesses said some students were also hurt during the incident.

Police fired about 20 blanks from a rifle and a pistol as well as

tear-gas canisters to disperse the protesters who were hurling petrol bombs and rocks. Yonhap News Agency said. Police declined to comment on the report.

The attack was part of student protests against Roh's trip to the United States, where he will hold talks with President George Bush Tuesday. Roh will meet Canadian leaders on Wednesday.

The U.S. Cultural Centre in Kwangju has been attacked by students about 30 times since 1980.

Germany freezes accounts of reform Communists in probe

BERLIN (R) — Germany has frozen all bank accounts of the reform Communist Party in an inquiry into multi-billion dollar assets inherited from its Stalinist predecessor, party officials said Friday.

Officials quoted by the party newspaper Neues Deutschland said the Treuhander government agency, which is privatising former east Germany's economy, had blocked all accounts of the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS).

"This new Treuhander step effectively plunges a left-wing opposition party into a state of emergency," said a PDS executive statement quoted by the newspaper.

Treuhander officials could not be immediately reached for comment.

PDS leaders Gregor Gysi said the Treuhander action amounted to virtual expropriation of a movement already sapped by the corrupt, repressive legacy of its predecessor, the Socialist Unity Party (SED), which ruled east Germany for 40 years.

"This is virtually the end of a political party, since now everything from petrol bills to purchases of writing paper and a newspaper advertisement cannot be done without approval of the (government)," he told the Saechsische Zeitung newspaper.

Treuhander said Tuesday it would take direct control of the PDS real estate empire — 768

buildings or sites — to secure accumulated funds against possible laundering. PDS spokesmen denied wrongdoing and vowed a court fight.

A popular uprising toppled SED rule in late 1989, forcing the party into hurried democratic reform and a name change. It was rouned in free elections and the conservative victors steered east Germany to union with west Germany in October.

An investigative commission had previously curbed PDS financial and property transactions exceeding 10,000 marks (\$5,550) in a complicated, long-running inquiry into the origin of the vast SED wealth.

The PDS has persistently denied accusations of having laundered ill-gotten funds through front companies.

It said early this year it wanted to divest 80 per cent of the myriad assets which made it Europe's richest party and keep the rest for normal political work.

Treuhander rejected the plan, saying investigators first had to determine what had been legally acquired.

The PDS, down from 2.4 million to 240,000 members in 18 months, is now threatened by breakup into factions of old-guard Marxists and Socialist reformers. Post-unification elections in December relegated it to a fringe party in parliament.

1 killed in rearmend contra attack on Nicaraguan police

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (R) — President Violeta Chamorro has called for all Nicaraguans to give up their arms after contra rebels attacked a police station on the anniversary of the end of Nicaragua's eight-year civil war.

One civilian was killed and two wounded in the attack, a senior army official and radio reports said.

About 40 rearmend contras attacked the police station in the northern town of Quilali early Thursday, a senior army source said. It was not immediately clear if the victims were killed by contra or police fire.

"The contras tried to spoil the anniversary of the end of the war," said the army source, who asked not to be further identified. "It was an act of propaganda by a minority group."

He had no more details of the attack at Quilali, about 250 kilometres northeast of Managua. Radio reports said the rebels fired on the police station

with grenades and rifles. Meanwhile in a ceremony marking the anniversary of the end of the eight-year war Chamorro called for all armed Nicaraguans — former contra rebels and their Sandinista enemies — to lay down their weapons.

A year ago the last of 20,000 U.S.-backed contras handed over their weapons to Chamorro in a ceremony that marked the end of the rebel's war against the former Sandinista government.

An estimated 400 former rebels have rearmend themselves in the northern mountains and hundreds of pro-Sandinista farmers still have assault rifles given them during the war years.

"I call on any armed Nicaraguan to lay down his weapons and bravely place confidence in the country and this government," Chamorro said in a speech to a gathering of about 200 former rebels, leaders of the popular Sandinista army, diplomats and government officials.

Dane among 14 killed in Sri Lankan bus attack

COLOMBO (R) — Tamil separatist guerrillas massacred 14 bus passengers, including a Danish national, in eastern Sri Lanka, military sources said Friday.

They said the rebels detonated a landmine under the bus Thursday night at Lahugala in eastern Amparai district, opened fire at the passengers and set the vehicle ablaze.

Ten bodies charred beyond recognition were found in the bus.

The bullet-riddled bodies of four other passengers, including those of the Danish national, one Sinhalese woman and two Muslim men, were found outside the vehicle.

The four were apparently shot when they tried to run away, the sources said.

Eight passengers were injured and taken to hospital. Eleven managed to run into the nearby jungle and escape.

The sources said the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, fighting for an independent homeland for the Tamil minority in the north and east of the Indian Ocean island, were responsible for the attack.

They said the name of the Danish national was Rasmussen Tes Tertio, but it was not clear what he was doing in Sri Lanka. Police quoted residents in the area as saying he arrived last month as a tourist while others said he was believed to be running a restaurant at Pottuvil about 10 kilometres away on the eastern coast.

This was the first time the rebels had killed a Westerner in the eight-year-old separatist war in which more than 30,000 people have died, police sources said.

The Tigers are the main suspects in the assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, killed by a woman suicide bomber on May 21 in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The rebels have denied any involvement.

Three Sri Lankans, believed to be Tigers, are among seven Tamils arrested in connection with Gandhi's death, Indian investigators have said.

The government blamed the Tigers for a bomb attack last Friday on the operational headquarters of the Defence Ministry in Colombo.

COLUMN

Victim of televised beating sells film option

LOS ANGELES (R) — The motorist whose beating by Los Angeles policemen was videotaped and broadcast across the United States, has sold a film production company an option to make a movie on the incident, his lawyer said. An amateur photographer videotaped Rodney King being beaten and kicked more than 50 times after a car chase on March 3. Four policemen are awaiting trial on assault and other charges. The lawyer, Steven Lerman, would not say how much King was paid by Triple 7 Entertainment Inc for the option. But King's aunt, Angela King, said in a television broadcast Sunday family members were opposed to a film based on the beating. "It brings memories to see him out there crawling around on the ground and begging for life," she said.

Pakistan's top welfare worker wants to leave

KARACHI (R) — Pakistan's top welfare worker declared in despair Wednesday that he had lost faith in his country and wanted to return to India from where he had migrated after its partition in 1947. "Pakistan has become unfit for human beings," Maulana Sartar Edhi said in an emotional statement after the theft of more than 4,500 animal hides due to be sold to help finance his country-wide network of ambulances. Edhi said gunmen beat ambulance drivers and stole the hides of sheep, goats, cows, buffalo and camels sacrificed in Karachi and Hyderabad, during the weekend Muslim festival of Eid Al Adha. Police said the thefts were carried out by criminals and political activists who wanted to sell the hides to raise funds for their own organisations.

Miss Whiplash takes on U.K. political establishment

LONDON (R) — Linda St Clair, better known as "Miss Whiplash" because of the sexual services she provides, wants to beat Britain's members of parliament at their own game. As leader of the Conservative Party she has launched a hunt for 650 would-be politicians to fight every parliamentary seat at the next general election on a platform of decriminalising prostitution. Since she advertised for candidates on the front page of a national newspaper just over a week ago, telephone calls and letters have been flooding into the central London house she once ran as a thriving brothel with up to a dozen women. "Every day I get a stack of mail," she said in an interview. "It's coming in every day." So far she has more than 80 potential candidates — enough to allow her to air political broadcasts on national television when the general election campaign begins some time in the next 12 months. Despite her slim chances of winning even a single seat, The Independent newspaper backed her stand, publishing an editorial which branded Britain's prostitution laws "ambiguous and hypocritical." St Clair said she had spent the last 20 years as a "prominent sexual services worker." Over that period she had numbered 195 members of parliament among her clientele.

Couple found guilty in endangered cat hunt

KING CITY, California (R) — A California rancher and his wife were found guilty of stocking their property with endangered species of lions, tigers and leopards for hunters to shoot. Bengal tigers, a black jaguar, a mountain lion and a spotted leopard were among eight cats shot between May and July 1990, according to trial testimony. Hunters, who paid at least \$3,000 for the privilege, received the skins as trophies. Some animals were so docile they had to be pulled from their cages before they could be shot. A jury convicted Floyd Lester Patterson, 35, on 35 counts of transporting endangered species for profit and possession of their body parts without a state permit. His wife, Dawn, 31, was found guilty on seven counts. The couple face up to a year in jail and a \$1,000 fine on each count. The jury was told the large cats had been bought for \$1,800 each from an Arizona livestock dealer, although lawyers said the animals may have come originally from Mexico.